



ILTS

AND OTHER

SOCIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.



E. C.

GRENVILLE MURRAY

150 ILLUSTRATIONS.





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AND

OTHER SOCIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.



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THE MISSES D'ORENBARRE EXHIBIT THEIR AVERSION TO FAT MEN AND SMOKERS.

JILTS,

AND

OTHER SOCIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

BY

E. C. GRENVILLE MURRAY,

AUTHOR OF "SIDE LIGHTS ON ENGLISH SOCIETY," "HIGH LIFE IN FRANCE
UNDER THE REPUBLIC," &c.

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JILTS.



1.

MRS. PINKERTON.

“ALL Jilts, sir: every one among 'em,” said our friend Mowser, who knows all the ins and outs of Society, and holds the key to many a cupboard where family skeletons are kept. He is perhaps a bit of a misogynist, for he has had more than one unsuccessful love passage with Amazons, who smote him in the tenderest spot of his heart and then fled. But Mowser having a heart, does not speak out of the coldness of the cynic, and we know that he holds truth as a jewel,

so we believed him when he repeated with emphasis ;
“ All Jilts, sir—every one.”

We were at a Charity Bazaar which was being held in the Hanover Square Rooms, for the purpose of supplying false teeth to the Toothless Poor. There were stalls all along the two sides of the large room upstairs, and in the smaller rooms below. A band was pounding music in a pestle and mortar fashion out of trombones and cymbals. The crowds of buyers were large, and the daughters of Eve who sold their fancy goods, refreshments, cigars, and what not, were all young and comely matrons with sprightly tongues—women who could ogle, coax, and would not mind letting a kiss be snatched from them in a corner, in return for a bank note or two for the aforesaid Toothless Poor.

Mowser is our authority for the latter statement, but we confess to not having tried whether the charity of these pretty creatures extended so far. They were every one members of the Strawberry Club—a social institution for promoting private theatricals, Richmond dinners, bazaars like this one, fancy dress balls and garden parties. The president was a young Duchess : all the committee women had dainty coronets painted on the panels of their broughams ; and not a member of the Club but was somebody either by right of her husband’s status or of her own charms. It goes without saying that all these Strawberry ladies had money or credit at command, for the lives they

led obliged them to sport several scores of new dresses every year.

But to begin in order. We had scarcely passed through the entrance door when a wide-awake little woman in a tight-fitting black silk dress which trailed two yards behind her, and with a mass of flaxen hair fluffed doggie-wise over her forehead, called to us softly



to give up our umbrellas. She delivered tickets in exchange for them, and said there was half-a-crown to pay. Her manner of ticketing the umbrellas was so deft and the joke she made about giving no change, as she accepted a sovereign and pocketed it, was so merry, that we were fascinated ; but not so Mowser, who ejaculated as we ascended the staircase : “ Poor Dick A—— ! You remember Dick, who was at Christ Church, don’t you ? It was that poodle-headed little mite who drove him to the dogs.”

“ Didn’t know Dick had gone to the dogs,” was our rejoinder.

“ Well, he’s sweltering among the jackals in India, which comes to the same thing. Dick was as pleasant a fellow as ever breathed till Rose B—— smashed him.”

“ Her name is Rose B—— ? ”

“ It was, but she’s Mrs. Pinkerton now—married a pudding-headed squire for the sake of his money. It’s an old story—” and, yielding to our request, Mowser gave the outlines of the events by which the winsome lady, who had confiscated our umbrellas, had developed into guilt.

Rose B—— was the daughter of a retired officer, who lived at Cheltenham, in fair but not abundant circumstances ; and she had a brother who went to Oxford. Dick A—— was one of this brother’s best friends, and it came to pass that at one commemoration Dick and Rose became acquainted. He danced with her at the Christ Church ball, and escorted her to the flower show



DICK ROWING STROKE AND ROSE STEERING.

in Worcester College gardens. Next day he went to lunch at the "Mitre," where Colonel B—— and his daughter were staying, and from that time a quiet love-making arose between the two. Dick was handsome and cheerful. He pulled stroke in one of the College boats, and looked mighty well in his straw hat and striped shirt in the procession of boats that rowed on the Regatta night. Then he owned a delightful set of rooms, and gave Rose and her father a champagne breakfast in them. Rose could not refrain from questioning her brother about his friend, and elicited numerous facts to Dick's advantage. He was one of the jolliest fellows alive; a younger son, but clever and sure to make his way. Rose's brother did not exactly know what Dick's way was going to be, but thought his friends would keep him till he picked up a living at the Bar, prior to becoming Lord Chancellor.

So the upshot of this was that Dick suggested a three days' water party. As the long vacation had arrived, he and his friend would row Colonel B—— and Rose from Wallingford to London, doing the trip by easy stages, and breaking it by a couple of days' sojourn at Windsor. It was beautiful weather for a boating tour, and nothing was so well calculated to ripen a budding passion into a fast attachment. The Colonel, an easy man, noticed nothing, but Rose's brother guessed the secret without being told of it, and did his best to embolden the lovers, by seeming unconscious of their goings on. The Colonel used to lie,

smoking, in the bows of the roomy boat. Dick rowed stroke, Rose steered, and the two being thus close together could talk in whispers and exchange smiles unperceived.

Either Rose was a born flirt, or else her heart was seriously smitten on this particular occasion, for she led poor Dick on and on till he only waited for an opportunity to make his declaration. All along the beautiful reaches of the upper Thames, by the woods of Cliveden, and the riverside lawns below Monkey Island, the mutual wooing continued, and it was good to see Dick's honest eyes glow as they admiringly gazed on the little hand which Rose, every now and then, trailed in the rippling water whilst holding the rudder lines.

At last Windsor was reached, and there Dick disclosed his new-born love. Sauntering under the trees in the Long Walk he told Rose of his prospects, his hopes. He had taken his degree; his friends would help him on in the world; he thought they could get him a post under Government, and he would toil with all his might to set up a home. Would Rose wait for him two years? As he asked this, Dick's voice trembled, but Rose, who had lowered her eyes to the grass, looked up with a blush, and gave him her hand, promising to wait for him as long as he pleased. She loved him with all her heart, she said, and would never marry anyone else—even if he were to die; no, indeed she wouldn't!"



ROSE AND PINKERTON WITH THE COTSWOLD HOUNDS.

“Well,” said Mowser with a sneer, “Christmas hadn’t come before she was engaged to Pinkerton. Pinkie was rich, you see, so he had only to show himself with his moony face and vacant grin, and Dick was at once forgotten. Pinkerton used to hunt with the Cotswold hounds, and Rose was introduced to him one bright November morning, when she had ridden with her father to see the hounds throw off. The best part of the fellow was his red coat, his hack, and his two seventeen-handers. He never stinted his horse-flesh for a good run, but rode like a centaur, taking everything that came in his way with that splash-dash nerve which only true-born oafs have.

“He and Rose met again at St. Mary’s Church on the following Sunday, and again at several Cheltenham balls; and their admiration for one another kept on increasing, as was natural, for Pinkerton has £20,000 a year, and Rose, dazzled by this income, flattered him to the top of his bent, till she seemed to worship the very spurs on his ‘tops.’ Pinkie was used to being pretty hotly courted, but he had never yet been made an idol of in this way, and thought it so pleasant that he let himself be inveigled into a proposal between a couple of waltzes, and was accepted out of hand. Egad, Rose knew better than to let such an occasion slip, and everybody approved her choice, her father in the first place, and then her brother, Dick’s precious friend, who had already calculated the advantage of being related to such a gilded individual as Pinkerton. So



the only question was how Dick should be dismissed ; but Rose was a sharp girl, and thought the most summary ways were the best. When Dick came down to Cheltenham to wish her a merry Christmas, she told him point blank that she had never loved him, and that their engagement was only a piece of childish nonsense which she had never taken *au sérieux*."

" Well, but wasn't that rather to her credit ? If a girl does not love a man, why should she marry him ? "

" A girl loves whom it pleases her to love," replied

Mowser ; “ the little minx was fond enough of Dick, so long as there was no other man in the way, and if she had had any heart, she would have remained faithful to him.”

“ If she had no heart, Dick was perhaps well rid of her.”

“ That’s what people always say, but it’s a fallacy. A girl may behave heartlessly before marriage, when she is not under control, and yet turn out a good wife afterwards, when she has to make the best of her position. Rose gets on well enough with Pinkerton.”

“ But doesn’t that prove that she likes him ? ”

“ No, it proves her power of adapting herself to circumstances, and it doesn’t excuse her for smashing the happiness of that wretched Dick, who swore hatred to the whole sex after her behaviour, and is grizzling to this day, cantankerous as a bear.”

Mowser seemed to take the conventional view of jilting, but there is something to be said on the other side of the question—girls being often inveigled by a momentary weakness into engagements the fulfilment of which would certainly make them miserable. The bright little lady who had secured our umbrellas, may or may not have destroyed the happiness of Dick A——; but Dick was possibly unwise to ask for a promise before he had sufficiently studied his charmer’s character. Under the trees of the Long Walk, on a warm June day after a joyous water party and a luncheon at which, may be, the champagne was not

spared, the wooing of a handsome cavalier in a straw hat and white flannel trousers no doubt seemed for the moment infinitely sweet, and the prospect of facing life's troubles in his company not particularly hard.



But why did that eternal want of pence force Dick to go back to London and to hard labour in a Govern-

ment office, while Rose returned to Cheltenham, outside the magic circle of his influence? If the pair had remained together, his power over her might have strengthened day by day, till nothing would have broken through it, not even Pinkerton on his three hundred guinea hunters. Women are not made to be left alone, and girls least of all. Their hearts are soft as wax and will take the impress of the first man who stamps his effigy firmly on them; but this process requires time and care, and if the man goes away, leaving but a faint outline of his lineaments on the virgin heart, he must not be surprised if somebody else, stepping in with a golden seal, imprints a new image, which entirely obliterates the old one. This was the excuse which we ventured to offer for Mrs. Pinkerton's jilting of Dick, but Mowser declined to see it.



II.

A WESTERN-COUNTY BELLE.

WE walked upstairs where the fun of the bazaar was loudest. All the stalls were prettily festooned with pink and white muslin, and over each figured an escutcheon bearing the name of the lady to whom the stall belonged. In elbowing our way up the crowded room we come to a mimic post-office, where a lovely post-mistress in sky-blue silk is delivering letters and post-cards at exorbitant rates. Any one can have a missive, a valentine, or a parcel for the asking. "Any letters for me?" "Oh yes," says the attractive official with a laugh, "you look as if you were expecting a love letter; what name, please?" "Any name, Tom, Dick, Harry." "Oh, very well, there are letters for you addressed to each of those names," and sorting a parcel of epistles in fancy-coloured envelopes, pink, saffron, and mauve, the post-mistress throws five upon the counter, each bearing in lieu of a stamp, a miniature photograph of her own pretty head and bust. Delightful innovation, and who would grudge the cost of it? "These notes come from afar, you see, but the charge



J.P.E.C.

LADY ST. MELLION'S POST-OFFICE AT THE BAZAAR FOR THE TOOTHLESS POOR.

is moderate," she observes archly, "half-a-sovereign apiece, please."

But who keeps this so excellent post-office? Her name is Lady St. Mellion, *née* Fanny Flounce. It is not for want of beaux that she has taken this stall this year, for her good husband, Sir Charles, is unremitting in his attentions, as most men are to their second wives. The indifferent type of husband does not often marry again. Fanny, though, has diplomatic reasons for selling letters on behalf of the Toothless Poor, apart from the mere fun of the thing. First, Mrs. Fortescue, the young and brilliant wife of a naval captain, now her neighbour in Eaton-square, and formerly her schoolfellow, must know that she has her accomplishments, and it is not by simple dint of wealth and rank that she shines. Next there are five younger sisters to be chaperoned at this bazaar, two little ones in pink who are helping to sort the letters, two nubile selling refreshments, and another nubile also retailing be-ribboned packets of cigarettes at the tobacco stall. But Fanny's strongest reason, mayhap, though she would not own it, is that her exertions last year at a country bazaar in behalf of the Ragged Bald, were so conspicuous that she must, for very shame, exert herself equally again, lest any one should suppose that it was only to hook a husband that she took so much trouble then. Everybody remembers by what arts at the bazaar in question she touched the widowed breast of Sir Charles St. Mellion, M.P.

Sir Charles, who somehow never liked bazaars and does not now, looks in for a few moments at the Hanover Square Rooms, bows, smiles, and retires. His dark hair has thinned more since his second marriage than it did in the three years of his widowhood; and his tall figure stoops a little more than it did when he had only himself to lean upon. He is perplexed at the gradual retirement of his old servants and puzzled at the confidence with which no fewer than three gentlemen are paying their court to his wife's second sister, Miss Julia Flounce.



But Mowser has little to say about Miss Julia : it is to the fair post-mistress that he calls attention with a nudge prior to whispering her history. She was born in a flourishing county, on one of the beautiful rivers of western England, a torrent rendered navigable by the tides. The extreme beauty of this river is caused by the shortness of its bed ; for, halfway along its course, where Markland lies, one is within easy reach of trout and badgers up the stream, or eels and herons in the other direction. A half hour's stroll from Markland northward will take the romantically-inclined to woods and cascades : a half-hour's row southward will take the athlete to a good course for a boat-race. The river is a deep furrow in a high table-land ; so one has shelter for cold weather, or breezes for summer, by spending five or six minutes in walking from moor to river, or from river to moor. Markland is most picturesquely situate and built. A thin line of houses on the quay ; a staircase of short terraces up the quarter-mile of bank ; a few roomy well-built residences on the crown of the hill, and just at the most commanding point on the edge of the slope the granite church and stuccoed parsonage—a commentary on the perishable character of individual theory contrasted with the eternity of universal truth.

It was in this stuccoed parsonage that Fanny and her sisters were brought up, amid scenes of sylvan beauty to which every season lent enchantment ; for



on the sunny slopes the wild cherry and the royal fern fill the spaces between gardens ; and in the more shady places, the valleys are lighted in spring and autumn with the green and russet of sturdy young oaks, and in winter with the silvery bark of the graceful birch. The purple heath and yellow gorse shine from rocks of variegated limestone, and the emerald grass of the marsh shows off the red ochre of the whirling stream.

In such a spot as this it would be hard indeed if the women were not pretty, and it is notorious that they are so ; Mowser affirms it with a sigh, nor were the six Misses Flounce any exception to the rule. They

came of two genuine county families, having that pre-historic pedigree, which, if it could be written, would exhibit a goodly array of names from Miletus, Phœnicia, Galatia, Rome, Norway and Saxony. The stalwart blood of ages has gone to make English beauty what it is—the true Anglo-Saxon beauty, we mean, of pink cheeks and merry blue eyes. As to the Norman invasion it has left scarcely a trace on that free and mirthful district where Markland lies. The simpering formality of your French-mannered Londoner would strike the Marklanders most unpleasantly, and would be understood by them as an expression of distrust and hatred. The Marklanders speak as they think, and think naïvely.

The Flounce family had everything to make them frank and hearty. From their birth they knew the whole country side; the fashions of their neighbourhood were just such as they pleased to set: they were the Rector's daughters, and the Squire—a cousin of St. Mellion's—who lived almost always on the spot dispensing hospitality, gave the girls the free run of his grounds, where his children were their playmates, and kept them posted as to all that went on in the world by lending them his illustrated papers, magazines, and novels from Mudie's.

The mother of the pretty bevy of girls died when they were children. Their father let them go their own way; they educated themselves for the most part, and, all things considered, did it well. They

were very fair musicians, and could ride and drive to perfection. They could make delicate lace or swing up a heavy church bell. They were clever florists and capital housewives. They could glide smoothly over a polished floor or tread firmly on a pointed rock. They were at home on skates or on stilts, and knew perfectly well how to acquit themselves of the duties of a sick room.



They could all of them fascinate, and, at the same time, without a moment's warning, repel effectually. They usually hunted in couples, and so were able to say many things which would have sounded bold if uttered by a girl alone; yet they had plenty of sense and character, and at times, when they wished to help their old father, they did it with a will, making themselves agreeable among the parishioners—distributing comfort among the old women, and too often agony among the young men.

They had, most of them, their little love adventures. One had a good offer and meant to accept it, but played with it too long, and the country gentleman—an uu-



THE FLOUNCE SISTERS AT MARKLAND.



imaginative person—got tired of waiting. Another tempted a soft young man to break off an engagement,

but he went back after all to his first love, frightened by the capriciousness which said him "yes" to-day and to-morrow "nay," without rhyme or reason. A third captivated one of her father's curates, but he was choked off by the contention of the others and by the advice of a friend, who warned him that he would be like a rat among six terriers.

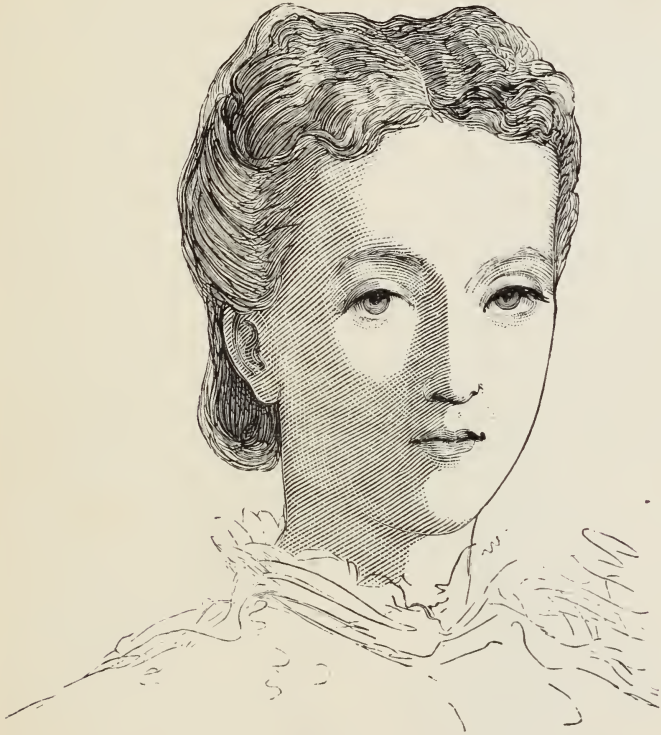
As for our heroine, Fanny, she had all along been the gayest of the family. She tried her 'prentice hand on a mere lad whose delight it was to drive a donkey four-in-hand over the downs. Then she aimed her shafts at a clever patentee, but missed her mark. Afterwards she fairly brought down a curate, and nearly broke his heart, but he recovered, became a colonial bishop, and a married man. Some love passages subsequently ensued between her and a piscatorial young squire of the neighbourhood, but after a time he threw her over with a coolness which for a while struck her speechless with indignation. There are ups and downs of this sort in the life of every flirt, but they teach a girl caution, and Fanny revenged herself for the disdain of the amateur of the rod and line by successively jilting three mild young men who had done nothing to deserve such a hard fate, except that they wrote bad verses to her.

Then at last came Sir Charles St. Mellion, while she was in the full flush of the strength which conquering beauty gives, and she managed to get hold of his heart before he was fairly aware that it was in danger. It was



MISS FANNY AND THE YOUNG SQUIRE.

a case of checkmate in three moves. All the county was astonished, and Sir Charles most of all ; but none gainsaid that Fanny bore the honours of her ladyship



with right noble dignity. Even at the bazaar for the Toothless Poor one could see how perfectly she had entered into the spirit of her social *rôle*—how justly she gauged the limits of coquetry to which she could go as a young wife. The letters that she gave us were real works of genius, so nicely worded as to amuse and enthrall the reader without compromising the writer.

Her clear blonde colour and slender figure disguised her twenty-five years even better than her playfulness. She looked no more than twenty, and quite artless, though in reality she was deep as a well, and presented to her sisters a beautiful pattern of the arts by which men may be caught and bound fast.

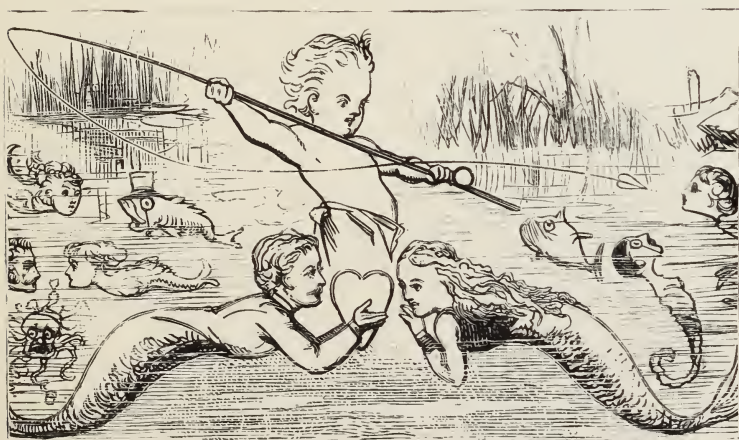
“In fact she’s a dangerous woman,” said Mowser, who had known her from childhood, “and you’ll see that her sisters will turn out worse Jilts than herself. Her example is enough to corrupt a whole family.



Everyone of those parsonage hoydens will want to be marrying ten thousand a year.”

“Well, they’re worth the money,” was our reflection,

and we could not see that Miss Fanny Flounce had done anything but what was meritorious in bringing her charms to the best market. She made a good wife to St. Mellion ; she was a good sister, and had been by all accounts a good daughter. Her father was on the way to becoming a Dean, one of her brothers had obtained a commission in a crack regiment, and another had been sent to Cambridge at Sir Charles's expense. All this could not have happened if Fanny had given herself to one of the three mild young men who wrote bad verses, or even to the youthful hobbledy-hoy—her first true love—who drove the four donkeys. When, indeed, one considers all the good she did by her marriage, it almost deserves to be called an act of charity—especially if it be admitted that charity should begin at home.



III.

ZOE, LADY TRYON.

BUT Mowser had other Jilts to show us. The further end of the room was occupied by a refreshment buffet, served by five ladies, three of them married, and the others marriageable. They drew beer from an engine as expertly as barmaids. One, with a cambric apron reaching up to her neck like a German tavern-waitress's, uncorked bottles of soda-water. Another presided over the decanters of sherry and port. The bar was so besieged by customers that it was as much as the five ladies could do to attend to them; but like Mrs. Pinkerton, they expedited matters by giving no change.

“Now that's a bad case—that woman with the lemonade,” said Mowser, alluding to the waitress with the high apron. “She jilted the very man who is flirting with her now—that tall fellow with the moustache. He's in the Blues.”

“He doesn't look as if he were in the ‘blues.’”

“In the Horse Guards Blue, I mean. But she likes him better than any creature on earth. See how she

allows him to whisper in her ear. He's doing his very best to drag her towards the D. C., and perhaps he'll succeed—peeress though she is."

"Lady Tryon, isn't it? That's one of the names on the board."

"Yes, Lady Tryon, and the 'Blue' is Jack Darmerer. Look how he squeezed the tip of her finger and made her spill a lot of that effervescing stuff. He follows her wherever she goes. He hands her into her carriage after parties; he helps to muffle her in her cloak when she is leaving a ball; if she goes to the Opera he is to be seen in the stalls, and visits her in her box between the acts. They ride in the Row together. They sit side by side for hours at the Zoo on Sundays; Jack goes to church for the sake of meeting my Lady when she comes out. Everybody is accustomed to see them together, and I'll be bound he calls her by her christian name of Zoe, by virtue of some distant cousinship which he claims."

"And what does Lord Tryon say to all that?"

"Oh he's taken up with experimental charities, schools, and that kind of thing. He's an entomologist, too, and collects stag-beetles. If his wife ever elopes he'll be the last man to hear of it."

"But she surely won't elope?"

"H'm, I don't know. She looks like doing it this very afternoon."

In this, though, Mowser was wrong, for if he had been a shrewder physiognomist he would have per-

ceived that Zoe, Lady Tryon, looked well able to take care of herself. Fall she might, but in some soft private spot where her fall would make no noise—never in public, headlong over the cliff of proprieties. She was a tall, resplendent creature, of the fleshly type dear to Rubens. The tavern apron and little laced cap that matched with it, in which she had decked herself out for this particular occasion, suited her so well that she might have been copied, as an ideal serving wench, straight into a picture of a Flemish kermese. Her dimpling cheeks teemed with health, her sensuous scarlet lips were moist as ripe cherries; her hair could have vied with a Prussian Gretchen's for luxuriance and warmth of golden tint; but there was a mocking devil in her blue eyes that told of a greater experience in the world's ways than even tavern wenches have. If she had struggled to win a coronet it was not for the sake of throwing it into the mire to please such a one as Jack Darmerer.

Yet Mowser was right in saying that she loved this moustached Adonis better than any soul alive, and her jilting of him had been rather a prudential than a mercenary transaction. Jack could not have afforded to maintain such an expensive wife as she was; and they were neither of them persons who could have lived happy in a cottage upon cold mutton and kisses. The thing might have done for a time—a week or two—but afterwards? Zoe had been obliged to consider

the “ afterwards ” even at a moment when her whole being thrilled with hardly restrainable passion, and when Jack himself was so enamoured that he mistook



his debts for capital in hand, and would have bravely married on the strength of them. Oh, if some old uncle would but have left him a legacy, so that he might never want for well-cut coats, expensive hacks, and the best of cigars!

Zoe used to think that if he had no more than two thousand a year she would have married him, and this

to her mind was heroism. She would have refused a Duke for love of him, if he could but have given her a comfortable home. But to accept draggle-tail misery without a prospect of better things in the future, when there was young Lord Tryon pressing her with offers of a grand rent-roll and dazzling social position—this was too much, and she told Jack so, with a frankness which made him swear, but which he saw to be unanswerable even while he swore at it. He by no means gave her up without a struggle, and she had to adapt her cherry lips to shrill language to send him about his business when mere reasoning would not avail.

But when once Zoe had got married and found her husband a dull fellow—when his conversation had ceased to please, and his stag-beetles to amuse her; when she had a satiety of all the pleasures which wealth can give, then she bethought her that life was not much without a little love, and she turned to Jack again. He sulked a bit at first, for he was hurt in his dignity at not having been allowed to make a fool of himself, but she was a fascinating creature who soon wheedled him round; and there they were now Darbying and Joaning *coram populo*, he holding a tumbler and whispering some pleasantry in her ear, while she was pouring out lemonade for him and laughing with all her features aglow.

There are plenty of Jilts like Lady Tryon, and no wonder, considering that marriage is a woman's career,



YOUNG LORD TRYON PROPOSING TO ZOE.



and that she has to look at it as prudently as a man does at the profession which he chooses. Nobody blames a man for saying that he does not marry so and so because he cannot afford it ; why then should a woman be condemned for calculating in a similar fashion ? A girl is brought up in the midst of luxury ; she is taught to be fond of rich dresses ; her accom-

plishments consist in riding and dancing, and housewifery is a science of which she knows not the A, B, C, yet she is to be stigmatized as heartless if she shrinks from facing poverty in the company of the first good-looking young fellow who chances to take her fancy!

This is neither kind nor rational. Poverty in the society of such persons as Jack Darmerer of the Blues is no joke, and Miss Zoe showed her sense in divining



that neither she nor Jack were made for such sport. After all, the Jack she loved was the handsome, easy living fellow always well-dressed, fed and perfumed, and he would have been this Jack no longer if he had had to bring up a family in a little suburban house

on £400 a year, cut off from his friends and the amusements which were the business of his life. And

she—Zoe—how would she have looked serving one o'clock dinners to a brood of noisy brats, wrangling with tradesmen, stitching all her own gowns, and seeing all her relatives drop her because she could no longer afford to visit them?

These things have to be weighed by a girl who knows more about the price of pearls than of butcher's meat; and who has no inclination for the romance which consists in darning the loved one's socks and chronicling his small beer. But, says Morality and Mowser, Zoe having married Lord Tryon, ought to have borne with his dryness, his dulness and his stag-beetles, and have remained a faithful wife to him. So she ought, and we should certainly have liked her better, if she had kept Jack Darmerer at a more respectful distance whilst he was drinking that lemonade, to the tune of the waltzes and quadrilles which the brass band kept on pounding.



IV.

AN INCONSOLABLE JILT.

“CIGARS, sir, or a bundle of cigarettes ; you may rely upon the quality.” This assurance came from Fanny St. Mellion’s sister Julia, who was keeping a stall with Mrs. O’Mores of the Glens. So ran the name on the escutcheon. Somebody had christened her and her husband collectively *O Tempora, O Mores!* because he looked older than his real age and she younger than hers. She was a very demure person, with languishing eyes, and would not be prevailed upon to bite off the end of a cigar for anybody. She let Julia Flounce do all the active part of the business, and confined herself to handing articles that were asked for. Some prettily embroidered tobacco-pouches were arranged on the counter, and various customers inquired whether it was she who had worked them ; but Mrs. O’Mores shook her head with a blush, and looked embarrassed. Shopkeeping was hardly her element. She was devoting herself to the cause of the Toothless Poor, but not *con amore*.

We had no need for Mowser to tell us who Mrs.

O'Mores was, for we knew more about her than he did. She was a Jilt too, if a girl be a Jilt for throwing over a man whom she does not like in order to marry one whom she does: anyhow, if men were in the habit of bringing actions for breach of promise, Mrs. O'Mores would have laid herself open to one and have been cast in heavy damages, had the jury assessed the suitor's loss in proportion to her beauty.

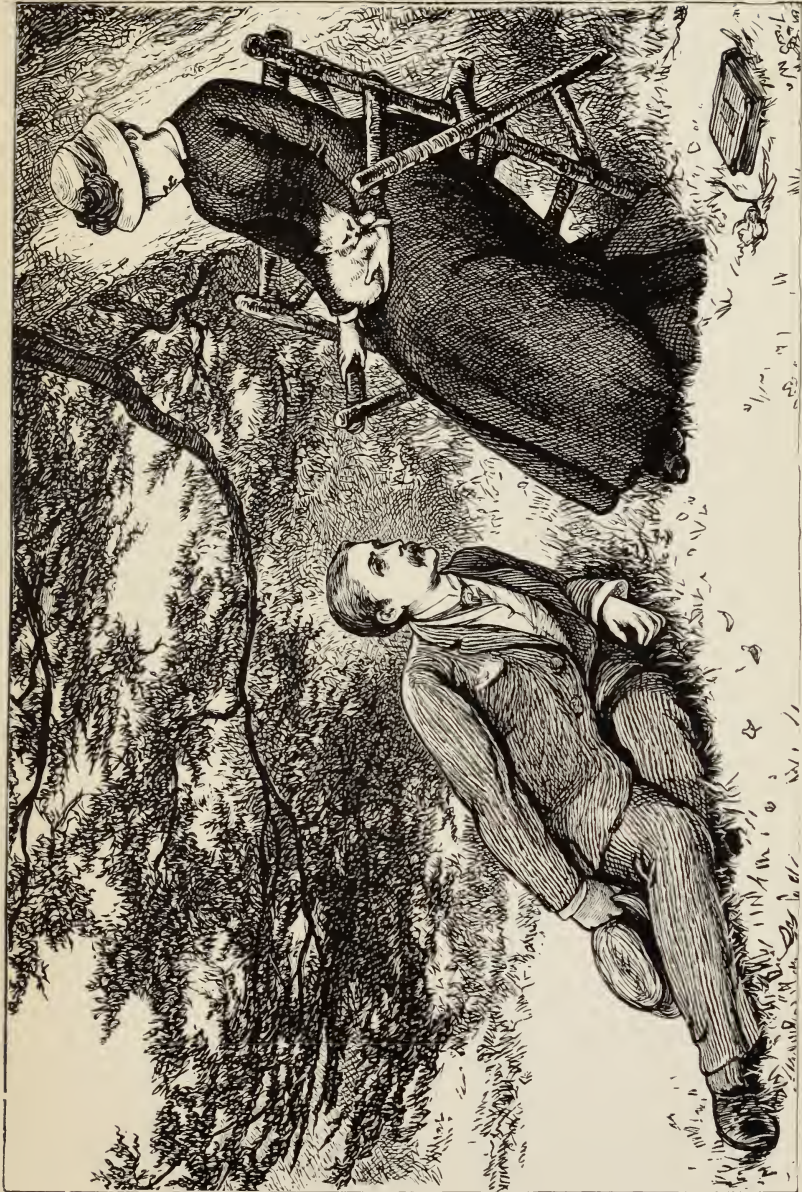
Her name was Lily, and she was the only daughter of a London merchant, who, having gone on a Continental tour with her when she was twelve years old, fell in with a Northamptonshire squire who had a son of sixteen. Between the merchant and the squire a fast friendship arose. They were both widowers, and had congenial tastes. They were tired of England, and thought of settling down for awhile in some French town, where their young people could learn foreign languages. It was eventually decided that they should club their resources and spend a year under the same roof, and this led to Lily Carden and Hugh Rowden becoming playmates like brother and sister.

While the elders read their journals on the ramparts of Abbeville, the boy and girl strolled further afield and enjoyed the Museum, the bands, and the August fair. They went to inspect the battlefield of Crécy, and traced the monotonous Somme for miles. They would make a solemn agreement to speak only French for an hour, and after a dead silence of some minutes would look at one another and laugh ex-

cessively, then chatter merrily in English. They did not speak of marriage, but the elders thought of it, and even sounded each other on the subject. Of course this did not bind the children.

In due time they all returned to England, and went to their respective homes. From this period, Hugh, who was entered at Cambridge, spent a part of all his holidays at Mr. Carden's house at Roehampton; and whilst he was absent, Lily and her father used to go down and visit Mr. Rowden at Melworth. Lily was still too much a girl to be more than a pet to the young Cantab, but by and by, when he had taken his degree and came home to help his father manage the estate, he saw her ripen into a perfect beauty. When she was eighteen, and he twenty-two, they were still calling each other by their christian names; but a shade of gravity was observable in the young fellow, and Lily, who liked fun, began to think that he gave too much time to his drains and cattle, and not enough to her. The fact is he had thoughts now of making her his wife, for his father had thrown out broad hints in that direction, and had rather gratuitously added that marriage was a serious business, so that Hugh thought it incumbent upon him to qualify for the wedded estate by putting away childish things.

He would have done better to remain natural, for Lily resented his affectation of superiority; and when he took it upon himself to lecture her for some frivolities in dress, she first pouted and then cried for



HUGH AND LILY AT ROEHAMPTON.

shame. He meanwhile strode about sturdily, in leather gaiters and velveteens, with a strong farmyard odour about him. He had always samples of grains in his pockets, and estimates for cow-house repairs trotting about his head. He talked of lambing and foaling, fencing and dykeing, and attended all the markets around. Of an evening he was so tired of trudging over ploughed fields, that he would drop off to sleep in the drawing-room, while Lily played the piano; and this made the elders laugh. At first Lily laughed too, but she ceased to do so when Hugh fell into a habit of sleeping, and appeared to think he was playing the man in acting thus.

The Cardens used to spend part of the winter at Melworth. At the end of one of these visits, Lily returned to town seriously piqued by her lover's boorishness. He came to pass a month of the season in London, and then she began comparing him with the other young men who fluttered round her at balls, and who were charmingly polite. There was the O'Mores of the Glens, for instance—an Irish gentleman of property who had all the blarneying talent of his race, and never accosted her without a well-turned compliment. She began to think him immensely better bred than Hugh, and better dressed too. Hugh never took her to flower shows. He was always off to visit an exhibition of agricultural implements, or a sale of farming stock. He slouched about without gloves, refused to dance, and called the Opera "rot."

Nothing moreover would render Hugh jealous, and that was bad, for it aggravates a girl to see a man make too sure of possessing her. Lily tried to excite the young boor in a hundred ways, and this was token enough that at heart she did love him; and truly one honest outburst of jealous rage would have reinstated him firmly in her affections. But he would not condescend to any such display of feeling, least of all in respect of the O'Mores, whom he despised and ridiculed as an "Irish hopper" in her hearing.

To be brief, Hugh grew more and more unbearable in proportion as the Irishman became more tender. Lily was romantic, and liked to be courted with words of hyperbolic endearment. When she came to weigh mentally the respective merits of the two men who disputed her hand, Hugh's merits decidedly kicked the beam. He was not richer than the O'Mores, his temper was not so sweet, he was far more likely to prove a domestic tyrant, and, to sum up, he did not seem to care for her a bit.

The one point in Hugh's favour consisted in his being a suitor of older standing; and when Lily looked back on the sunny past, to the days when they were both children, she felt a compunction about throwing him over. She was almost afraid to do it, as much for his father's sake, and for her father's, as for his own.

Lily resolved to give Hugh one more chance, and announced to him with playful demureness that she

thought the O'Mores was in love with her, and intended to propose. What should she do? Was Ireland a nice country? How would it work if she married an Irishman? They said the O'Mores had some beautiful family lace, and she doated so upon lace; she would almost marry a man for the sake of wearing the lace that had figured on his grandmother's shoulders. In saying all this, Lily was playful as a kitten; but Hugh, possessed by some demon of contention, absolutely declined to take the joke. His brow grew dark, and he answered icily that if Lily chose to throw herself at the head of the first jackanapes who crossed her path, she was welcome. Thereat, the girl was mortified and indignant. "Very well, since you are so indifferent about it, I will marry a man who does care for me," she said, with tears in her eyes; and for a moment she hoped that Hugh would take her hands in his, smile in his old way, and make his final peace with her. But he walked out, sulking. She dried her eyes by herself, and before the end of the season, was Mrs. O'Mores.

In all this Hugh Rowden was quite in the wrong, and he saw it the instant Lily Carden had become lost to him for ever. The moment the scales dropped from his eyes he recognised his blunder—perceived that he had been acting a fool's part, felt ashamed of himself, and would have given half his fortune to retrace his steps. Lily on her side was never fairly happy after jilting him. It was in vain that she repeated to her-

self how greatly she had been provoked. She would flush at thinking of his unkindness ; she was angry with him ; she tried to harden herself into satisfaction at having acted with spirit ; but it was all to no purpose. She had severed her first love from the surface of her heart, but the roots remained, and they were so deep that no effort could eradicate them.

A dismal position this, and for a married woman constant misery. Lily's husband suspected nothing of his wife's sentiments. He was gentle, good-humoured, careful to please her ; and she did her best to requite his attentions by every outward show of tenderness. But in her stray thoughts Hugh Rowden was ever present. The merest mention of his name was enough to make her heart beat with painful pulses. Melworth and its inmates, its walks, tall trees, and sloping lawns, remained as deeply engraved in her memory as if the place had been her home ; and there were times when the idea that some other girl would become mistress of all this, and Hugh's wife at the same time, made her cry out with grief. But Hugh did not marry. One day they met, and he looked so altered ; his manners were so kind, brotherly, and unassuming—so full of implied forgiveness too—that it seemed to Lily as if the Hugh of her girlhood had suddenly returned ; and she could not refrain from bursting into tears while he stood by with a quivering lip.

We told Mowser as much of this history as we then



THE AFTER MEETING OF HUGH ROWDEN AND LILY CARDEN.

knew (it has been completed since by other particulars), and he turned pensive :—

“ Well, it’s better that they didn’t marry,” said he. “ They would never have been happy together.”

“ Why not ? Had not Lily the right to expect that Hugh would evince his appreciation of her by wooing her properly ? ”

“ Girls are too sweet-toothed : they always want one to give them sugar. If a wife once takes it into her head that it’s a husband’s duty to go on dropping lumps into her tea-cup, the man might as well leave off farming and turn confectioner.”

“ He might as well leave off playing the churl ; but that’s another matter. If Lily and Hugh had married, their respective asperities would have rubbed away in time. She would have found that he was an excellent fellow at bottom, and he would have become less of a bear when he discovered that his manners really annoyed her. It was her unfortunate misunderstanding that parted them.”

“ No, it was the fact of her being at heart a Jilt. If she had been a true-hearted girl, she would have seen that her lover’s ruggedness covered every quality you mention. But women are creatures of variety, and would rather inflict a death-wound than let it be believed that they have no arrows in their quiver.”

“ You take a one-eyed view of the sex, Mowser.”

“ One eye is enough to see with, if it be wide open,” was this misogynist’s reply.

V.

A JILTED DRYSALTER.

THE band continued to crash out cacophony with its cymbals and flutes, and the crowd in the rooms grew thicker. We made some purchases and were fleeced. We struggled our way to the refreshment bar, and got Lady Tryon to serve us each with a glass of sherry; then we struggled out again, for our pockets were as empty as the gums of any toothless pauper. There was nothing more to see, and Mowser assured us that we should never get away if we stopped to recall the histories of all the Jilts in the room. He had invitations to some private theatricals that were to be given next day by the Strawberry Club at the house of Lady St. Mellion, and proposed that we should accompany him, suggesting that there we might sate our eyes with more obdurate specimens of the genus Jilt than any we had yet beheld.

Two drawing-rooms, the one converted into a stage the other into an auditorium—such was the *locus dramatis*; and a number of playbills on white satin, with pink letters, were hung on the walls to lend

additional local colouring. All Belgravia was there to see the fun, and a Prince of the Blood sat in the front row of armchairs, playing the agreeable to the hostess. Mowser and ourselves had no seats, but were jammed in a window embrasure, close to a portly gentleman of fifty with a benevolent countenance, and a head bald as an ostrich egg. Mowser and he shook hands, and were talking together when the curtain rose. A moment afterwards the portly gentleman suddenly turned the hue of cranberry, and appeared, in American parlance, to "feel bad." Without a word of explanation, he squared his elbows and made for the door. "Hush!" cried the polite audience, astonished; but he paid no heed, and jostled his way on till he reached the landing, when he vanished, and we saw no more of him.



Mowser laughed, and said, "That's poor Nibbs the drysalter, and that golden-haired woman in the small-clothes and the leopard's skin, who is playing Diana, is Lady Wastelyffe, who drove him half-mad."

"Why did he come here to-night if her presence excites him in that way?"

"I suppose he didn't see the playbills, or perhaps he was simple enough to imagine that he was steeled against her magic; but he has found out his mistake, you see. She cost him twenty thousand pounds before sending him about his business."

"He probably got some return for his money in the pleasure of being fooled?"

"Well, the process *is* pleasurable until the climax comes," admitted Mowser; "but this was an exceptionally villainous case. Lady Wastelyffe was an Earl's daughter, and poor Nibbs was ambitious of getting a rise in the world by marrying her. This fall of his was naturally all the harder as it covered him with ridicule."

"More stupid of him to expose himself to such a catastrophe."

"There have been plenty of Job's comforters to tell him that," said Mowser. "And no doubt if he had wooed a brother drysalter's daughter, he would have met with better treatment. But it is hard lines that a man shouldn't be able to rely on the honour of a peer's daughter. She allowed Nibbs to pay all her debts and her brother's, and only threw him over when

he had extricated her precious family out of a heap of difficulties."

"She's an adorable-looking woman anyhow," was our remark ; and we quoted the lines :—

"If to her chance some human errors fall,
Look on her face and you'll forget them all."

"Oh, yes : she'd coax a donkey out of a bunch of carrots, trust her for that," rejoined Mowser, drily ; and for a moment we were both silent, gazing at Lady Wastelyffe's *poses plastiques*, as she attitudinized voluptuously before a young lady representing Endymion.

By and by a smart, punning dialogue commenced between the pair, and her ladyship's voice sounded clear as a full-toned bell. It was an aristocratic voice. Lady Wastelyffe was one of those persons who never speak low, being of too high rank to care whether the vulgar overhear their remarks. In drawing-rooms, in the hunting field, wherever she went, she had a calm indifferent look. She was chatty and quick of repartee with persons of her own rank ; very exacting of homage with men ; rude and spiteful towards women whom she hated. She never let a slight pass, nor accepted an epigram without repaying it with usury. In her cool, full-pitched voice she said the most monstrous things of members of her own sex who had offended her. On one occasion the wife of an M.P. having crossed tongues with her, she said quite aloud in the hearing of a hundred persons, "My good woman, your

husband says you should never be argued with after you have dined. Let us break off please."

How would poor Nibbs have got on with a wife of this sort? She would have crushed his soft heart into water, that would have oozed from his eyes day and night. He was a zany to have ever pitched his ambition on winning her; and the rebuff he got was a warning sent by Providence to other drysalters who might have been tempted similarly to forget themselves. Not but that Lady Wastelyffe made an excellent wife to the noble Marquis her husband; but his was just such a cool nature as hers. They were perfectly mated—he a rake, gambler, owner of racing stables, who had already lost one fortune on the turf and was running through another—she a coquette of the *grand monde*, who accounted money as mere dross, and scattered it to satisfy her every whim.

The Marquis never scolded her, and her behaviour to him was always good natured. He went his way, she hers. When he had won a few thousands on a race, he gave her as much as she wanted, and he supplied her with advice as to the horses she should back for her own private book. She betted as much as he did, though not such large sums, and was never at a loss to find rich men who were ready to give or take the odds she mentioned. She would have laughed at a goody-goody bet for gloves. Society knew that on a certain Gold Cup day at Ascot she had



netted seven thousand pounds ; but her expenditure in dresses and jewellery was so large, that she scarcely ever had a penny more than she wanted.

Her ladyship had begun contracting debts in her

first season out; and her father, who was nervous about her, very much desired that she should marry steady-going Nibbs. He would not hear of Lord Wastelyffe, and forbade him the house. But what can a father's prohibition avail against a sharp girl's tactics? Lady Florence kept the steady-going Nibbs in a fool's paradise of hope till he had settled her bills (not in cash, but by equivalent presents, which she never returned) and paid her pet brother in the Guards out of some scrape where his good name was like to have foundered. She allowed him to re-furnish Nibsworth Hall, Surrey, in the anticipation of her becoming its mistress. She chose the hangings of a sky-blue boudoir that was to be hers; and with admirably-acted interest gave her advice about the building of a conservatory.

The enchanted Nibbs used to strut about his offices in Salt Lane, E.C., saying that he was going to enter the exalted family of Lord Angleham, whose interest would procure him a seat in Parliament, a baronetage, and possibly a coronet by and by. His partners in the drysalting business were jaundiced with envy, and laughed in their sleeves at the patronising airs he assumed, though they feared to resent them to his face. Poor Nibbs, who was a good fellow at bottom, had no idea of how offensive and ludicrous he was becoming. All Salt Lane took to wishing him a "cropper," and truly there was mirth in that commercial district on the day when it became known

how egregiously he had been sold by his aristocratic sweetheart.

She eloped from him one bright morning when he had taken her to her milliner's to order her wedding dress. He was waiting outside in his brougham, and she suffered him to wait there many hours ; for she had gone out by a side door in another street, where Lord Wastelyffe was in attendance with a marriage licence in his pocket. The pair were wedded half-an-hour later, while the steady-going Nibbs was still in his brougham ; and Lord Angleham received intimation of the happy event through a note which Lady Florence sent, requesting that her clothes might be forwarded to her husband's seat in Leicestershire. It was only in the postscript that she added : " Dear papa, you will see by my signature that I married Lord Wastelyffe this morning."

Ill-starred Nibbs, an object of derision in Salt Lane and in Society ! No doubt it was abominably hard, and he might well be excused for tearing out tufts of his hair in the privacy of his own chambers ; but if he had been a man of wit, what a fine chance he would have had to bear off his calamity with a twinkling eye that would have put the laughers on his side. He should have gone about rejoicing that he was quit of an awkward bargain. He should have sent the new Lady Wastelyffe a wedding present. He should have courted her society instead of shunning it, and have greeted her with the eye of polite mockery.

All this should Nibbs have done if he had been a fellow of nerve and sense; but instead of that there was not a house but he filled with his unmanly wailings. He went about telling all the ladies he knew how grossly he had been deceived, how much money he had spent; he computed the cost of his new conservatory and of the yards of satin hangings that had been bought for Lady Florence's sky-blue boudoir. He maundered about, being a blighted object, and said that he thought the law courts would avenge him if he applied to them, which he would not do, for he was not vindictive, only heart-broken, at which his fair listeners had some trouble to keep from laughing in his face. There are some men who can get no pity for their amorous woes, and Mowser was possibly the only man in Society who thought that Nibbs was an ill-used drysalter.





THE PRINCE OF THE BLOOD AT THE PRIVATE THEATRICALS OF THE STRAWBERRY CLUB.

VI.

LOVE AND PICKLES.

BUT what of the young lady who was playing Endymion to Lady Wastelyffe's Diana? The scene represented a garden with a moss bank; and after the running dialogue already mentioned, Endymion lay down to sleep, with a stream of electric light beating upon him. The Prince of the Blood clapped his hands with enthusiasm. Endymion looked beautiful in these rays of simulated moonlight, and many in the room were inquiring the actress's name. It was Mrs. Dewberry, wife of Dewberry, the great pickle manufacturer. He had made a colossal fortune out of gherkins. His wares filled every mouth. His name and trade mark were known to the dinner tables of all humanity.

Oddly enough, Mrs. Dewberry's story was the exact converse of Lady Wastelyffe's. She had pined to marry a curate. From the day when she had first begun to blossom into lovely maidenhood, with almond-shaped eyes and hair dark as a crow's wing, she had loved a young clergyman with red hair and

cheeks rosy as codlings. A joyous, clever divine he was, who wrote comical verses and was great at getting up games on a winter evening. He used to



blacken his face and sing nigger melodies with a battered white hat on his head. His antics would have made a stuffed bird laugh. The Archdeacon, a solemn man, could never preserve his gravity at sight

of him ; and as for Grace Dillon—as Mrs. Dewberry was then called—she thought no more gifted being had ever adorned Holy Orders.

Mr. Lambkin was not only a facetious curate—he was a man of talent, who had taken high university honours. He wrote capital magazine articles, and employed a good deal of his leisure in literary work which was making him a name. He also preached fluently, and with greater earnestness than one would have expected from a man so cheerful in private life. He was one of those persons who are never idle a moment. Always ready for social amusements, and equally ready to give his time and energies for the relief of anyone in trouble, he never wasted a minute of the time that was his own. He was not badly off, for he had a fellowship, and derived a substantial addition to his income from his pen. He was certain to obtain a college living by and by ; he could also rely on securing as many private pupils as he cared to take ; and altogether he was in a position to marry and offer his wife a most comfortable home.

But the Rev. Peter Lambkin's advantages, when balanced against those of Mr. Dewberry, the pickle man, weighed only as a pea against a nugget. Lambkin might have talent and character, but Dewberry had gherkins and consols. His manufactures employed fifteen hundred workwomen, who pickled without cessation. Four hundred more were engaged in potting,

and another hundred found constant employment in pasting labels with the fine red and gold trade-marks on to the pots. Then Dewberry had been thrice mayor of his town and four times a candidate for Parliament in the Liberal interest. He had been unsuccessful, to be sure ; but the majority against him diminished at every election, and everyone was persuaded that his perseverance and money would end by carrying the day.

Such a man as this could not be made light of by a family whose circumstances were a little precarious. Grace Dillon's father was a retired Colonel, who had contracted expensive tastes in the army and fretted in the quasi-beggary of half-pay. He had settled in an inland watering town which passed for being cheap, but which was not so, owing to the pretensions of all who lived in it to outshine one another in hospitalities. London is the only cheap place for persons who desire to live quietly. At X—— there were constant innovations that mulcted the purses of the inhabitants. First a club was started, then a racecourse, then a theatre was opened. New streets were built, the population increased, house-rent rose apace, and the summer-time influx of fashionable visitors obliged the permanent residents to indulge in elegancies of dress and entertainment.

Colonel Dillon, whose social position made it incumbent upon him to take a lead in the gaieties of the place, and whose tastes would have instigated him to

do so, whether compelled or not, found his resources unequal to his expenditure, and naturally began to look forward to bettering himself by the marriage of his only daughter. At first he did not object to the



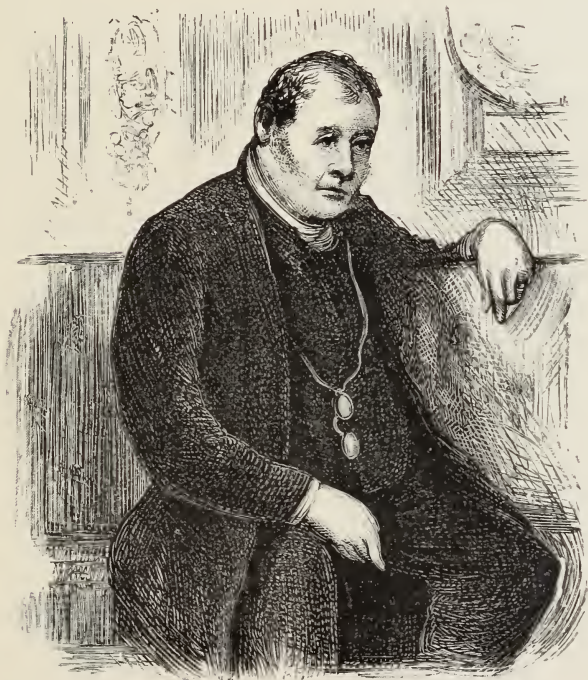
idea of Grace marrying Mr. Lambkin. So long as no richer suitor was in view, he calculated that a clerical son-in-law, with a good benefice and a houseful of rich pupils, might do for him; but the instant Mr. Mayor

Dewberry offered himself the case was altered, and Grace was sternly prohibited from holding any further intercourse with the "carrotty parson."

Now a clergyman cannot foil parental tyranny by eloping with the object of his affections. Such freaks are permissible in laymen, and especially in the military; but a priest who should carry off a girl under age, and marry her "through the window," would have to hear some stiff words from his Bishop, and possibly find his clerical career cut very short. All that Lambkin could do was to offer respectful remonstrance, and to plead that Grace Dillon loved him—which she did. Their courtship had long been connived at by the Colonel, if not actually encouraged. He had said more than once: "Lambkin, my boy, you must think of settling in life. The girl who marries you will have a good time of it;" and Lambkin even pretended having heard the Colonel say that he would not wish his daughter a better fate than to become Mrs. Lambkin. But this the Colonel denied, and snatched the statement as a peg to hang a quarrel upon. He was surprised at the curate's effrontery. If it were not for his cloth, he would have chastised him in public. At any rate, his rector should hear how grossly he had behaved, and all respectable persons in the town should be warned against admitting him to their houses.

Poor Lambkin stood aghast. The Colonel was a powerful man, as active as he was choleric, and when

he set himself to declaring everywhere—at the club, in the streets, on the racecourse—that the “confounded parson was a regular blackguard, by Jove!—a fellow whose morals couldn’t be touched with a pair of tongs”—all who were ignorant as to how the



quarrel had arisen, and they were the majority, thought that Mr. Lambkin must indeed have done something monstrous. He, the while, was too much attached to Grace to think of defending himself at her father’s expense. To his rector alone he told the truth, but this reverend gentleman received the con-

fession coldly, for he had daughters of his own, and thought that the curate would have shown good taste in making his selection from among them. He rebuked Lambkin, saying that fathers are the best judges of their children's happiness—that Colonel Dillon was a most respectable man, a good churchman, an influential person, and that Lambkin would do well to apologise to him.

Apologise for what? Lambkin was not so spiritless as to avow himself the offender when he had been sinned against—and bitterly; and so the upshot was that he left the diocese. But before going he wrote Grace a letter of justification, and pledged her his inextinguishable and faithful love. He said that he would release her from her engagement if she pleased, but that if she would wait for him till she was of age, he would also wait for her, though, in the meantime, he counselled her to submit to her parents and try to win their consent by obedience, not by obstinacy.

Nothing could have been better than this letter, which was that of a gentleman as well as an ardent lover; but of course Grace never received it. Her father threw it into the fire, and in informing her that Mr. Lambkin had left the town, used the word "absconded," and hinted at his being involved in transactions most discreditable. Grace could not believe that. With welling eyes and trembling lips, she begged to be told what these transactions were, for though of soft mood, she was not craven; and it

seemed, for a day or two, as if she intended to rebel against paternal authority. But the Colonel would give her no explanations, and told her in a flustering tone never to recur "to the disreputable subject."

Grace's mother also lectured her sharply for her "impropriety;" and then began for the unhappy girl that struggle between inclination and filial duty which has to be waged, not desultorily, but every day



and hour. She did as other girls do—grew thin and languid, fretted, cried in her own room, but finally gave in. The pickle merchant was decidedly too

pressing, and the curate too far off. Why did not the latter write just a few lines to advise her how to act? Grace could not so much as learn whither he had gone. She thought he might have used some covert means of getting a letter conveyed to her, and his not having done so seemed a proof that he was indifferent to her. Girls understand nothing about delicacy in love matters—that is, about delicacy of which they are the victims. They are all for clandestine methods; and if the Reverend Peter Lambkin had addressed a letter to some other place than Grace's home—say to the Circulating Library to which she was a subscriber—she would have remained stubbornly faithful to him as long as he pleased.

As it was, Grace ended by marrying the pickle merchant. He was not a bad sort of man, though lean, ugly, and unsteady with his "h's." He had no romance in his composition, but talked commercially of marriage as a "partnership for life," a "contract between parties mutually agreeable;" and he promised that Grace should be no "loser" by the step she took, that her wishes should always "be reckoned with," and that she should be repaid with "good interest" for any affection she chose to "advance." Dreary jargon this, but it did not prevent honest Dewberry from sincerely loving his beautiful bride, and from lifting his head very proudly the first time he took her to visit his gherkin factory, where those

two thousand workpeople were eternally pickling, potting, and labelling.

Marriage, moreover, lent a spur to Dewberry's ambition, and Colonel Dillon found no difficulty in persuading him that he ought now to make another try for Parliament. He did so, and the town of X—— long rang with fables as to the prodigious sums which had been spent to carry "Old Vinegar," as he was called, to the top of the poll. Never was seen such a profusion of bill-sticking, treating, monster meetings, demonstrations with banners, rotten-egg riots, and brass bands. Party spirit ran so high that the pickle merchant had to walk through the streets with his umbrella up in broad sunlight, because of the dead cats and cabbage-stalks that were flying to and fro. He had his nose half-flattened with a brick-bat and one eye blackened with a Tory fist; but the upshot of all this was that he got elected, and his opponent found himself so badly beaten, that he hesitated to lodge a petition for unseating him.

Mr. Dewberry now came up to town with his wife, hired a house for the season, and was presented at Court together with Mrs. D. He was determined to do things gradually, as he said, and began to keep open house for the entertainment of those whom his father-in-law recommended to him as eligible people. As for Grace, her beauty was a passport everywhere, and she soon became queen of a small circle of her own; then she got enrolled a member of the fashion-

able Strawberry Club, and that is how she came to be acting the part of Endymion in a charade at St. Melion House.

But what of poor Lambkin? Well, he conceived a bad opinion of the sex, and thought he had been hardly used. He betook himself for refuge to the columns of the *Saturday Censor*, and earned a name as the "wild curate" who wrote such stinging articles on the frailties of women. He had his precedent for such a course in the revenge taken by a great poet who bombarded his jilting "Cousin Amy" with a poem which is known from London to Cathay; but if he flattered himself that by these means he ever stirred remorse in the breast of the pickle merchant's wife, he was wrong, for women rather like to feel that they have driven a man mad. Grace read Lambkin's articles with enjoyment, and laughed over them in her husband's company. Colonel Dillon talked of going to tweak the curate's nose; but his daughter dissuaded him, and it was decided between them all that Mr. Lambkin was "a despicable creature who had behaved very badly." Many other people continued to think so too. In fact, people have a tendency to think as rich pickle merchants and the like bid them.

VII.

AN ENTR'ACTE.

THE curtain fell upon the loves of Endymion and Diana. The Prince of the Blood told our hostess how delighted he was, and pending the next charade, two fiddles and a piano discoursed music whilst tea and ices were handed round. Mowser began to moralize



upon the education we give our women, and advanced the bold opinion that it taught them nothing but folly. What was the sense of women exhibiting themselves in public with bare backs and shoulders, pounds of false hair, and twenty-button gloves which reached to their elbows? Did they trick themselves out thus to please their husbands? if not, whom? and why should husbands pay in order that other men might be pleased? Did a man marry for the sake of having a wife to himself, or merely to give his name to a woman who should spend her life in trying to excite the admiration and captivate the hearts of men at large? Society was a medley of persons who instigate one another to do evil. Nine out of every ten women in it cared more for the compliments of strangers than for the good opinion of their own husbands, and nine out of every ten men were bent upon delighting other men's wives rather than their own. "I don't wonder at there being so many Jilts," said Mowser. "Education says to the girls, 'Learn to shine, my dears—dance, babble, unveil your shoulders.' It teaches them that women are made to be toyed with, so they prefer fulfilling that destiny by marrying rich men to drudging in poverty, which they have not learned to regard as suitable to their charms."

"Stay a moment; poor men find wives as easily as the rich," was our objection.

"All can't draw prizes, but all try for them," answered Mowser. "The poor man's wife would have

given herself to a richer man if she had had the chance. 'Tice any girl with a coronet, and see how quickly she'll be drawn. The fact is there is mighty little romance in poverty, whereas there is a great deal in rank and wealth. Your plutocrat can do such nice things in his wooing. He can court a girl through all her five senses at once. Bouquets, bracelets, operaboxes, and champagne luncheons are so many deputies



which he employs to plead his cause when he has no eloquence of his own."

"Do you think these things avail much when a girl is really in love?" was our sceptical query.

"They avail more than the girls themselves fancy," replied Mowser. "To begin with, what is love? an

inclination felt for a man who has made himself more agreeable than other men. He may not be a pleasant fellow at all, but some physical or social superiority he possesses lifts him temporarily on a pedestal, where he lords it till his very arrogance helps to complete the fascination of the simple creature grovelling at his feet. I have seen girls fall in love with the veriest cubs for lack of other male society. Don't tell me there was any deep sentiment in these attachments. The girls wanted husbands, that is all; they were obeying the natural law which attracts sex to sex, and the social law which bids a girl get married as fast as she can, lest she glide into old spinsterhood.

“If a girl, after deciding to accept a genteel pauper, chances to allure a man who has it in his power to make her a bed of rose-leaves, see how quickly her eyes get opened to the beauties of indolence and luxury. Self-esteem tells her that she was not made merely for the procreation of indigent brats, and the study of that parsimonious arithmetic which consists in paring down bakers' bills. She wants to walk in silk attire, and feels grateful to the man who, by his courtship, acknowledges her right to do so. Who can deny the magic of fine linen, jewels, softly-cushioned broughams, champagne, and obedient menials upon a woman's mind? and who can dispute the still greater magic afforded by the prospect of eclipsing sisters and school-friends who have married poorly?

“Sometimes, if a girl has got hopelessly engaged to

a fellow with a shrunken purse—if she be so near her wedding-day that it is impossible to break off the match without making a scandal—pride and vanity will induce her to keep her pledge, but this will be simply because the plutocrat came too late into the field. If the two had started at the post together, or if the pauper had had but a half-distance start, the plutocrat would have run him down and come in first with flying colours. Moreover, a woman feels sore all her life at having missed the chance of a rich marriage. The thought of it turns her sour the first time matrimonial difficulties begin, and her wretched husband has uxorial peevishness and contempt poured upon him by the bucketful.”

“That may be, Mowser, but we have also instances of rich men’s wives who deplored not having married their first loves, poor though they were.”

“Which all comes of the contrariness of human nature in never being satisfied with its present lot,” responded the misogynist emphatically. “The man who wrote the ‘Praises of Poverty’—Seneca, wasn’t it?—indited his remarks upon a golden table, and had a couple of slaves beside him to fan the flies away. . A woman who sits by her boudoir fire with her feet well-warmed, a novel on her lap, and a five o’clock tea with cream and crumpets at her elbow, is very apt to dream that she was cut out for the part of heroine. She gilds poverty with her imaginative touches till it looks all rosy. Her husband bores her,

and she thinks of the other man who used to make her laugh, and whose muscles were like whipcord. She attributes to him talents which he never had, charms which she never discovered in him while she had the opportunity of observing him every day, and she dreams of herself as fighting life's battles by his side, and always winning.

“It never occurs to her to reflect that the lot she renounced was that of being a perennial wet-nurse, of living upon mutton hash, and growing up into a dowdy slattern, worried, and perhaps bullied, by a man rendered cantankerous by failures in his profession. It is easy to be happy in fancy with a man whose ideal perfections one may depict at one's leisure. A woman is often found whimpering over a novel which portrays the life of a heroine such as she thinks herself to be ; but just let her rich husband die, leaving her penniless, and you'll see whether she doesn't at once set her widow's cap at another rich man sooner than betake herself to that life of struggling which she deemed so exciting when viewed from a distance.”

“That would in effect only prove that women, having grown accustomed to luxuries, find it hard to do without them. But, talking of widows, don't you think a first experience as to the vanity of riches makes those who have enough to live on more anxious to secure happiness than rank or wealth in their second marriages ?”

“That depends,” said Mowser; “but anyhow, a widow’s second choice is generally a calculation of pure selfishness. Girls sometimes marry to please their sweethearts, widows re-marry to please themselves. They are even worse Jilts than girls, for they have learned to know the sort of men who make good husbands, and in hunting for them, use up candidates by the series. In most cases the ambition of a widow is to find a second husband as little like her dear departed as possible. But stay—there’s the curtain going to rise. I think we are about to see a widow in the next piece and another pert Miss who is an heiress. I know them both, and they have edifying histories.”

The murmur of tongues and the clattering of teaspoons ceased as Mowser said this. The two fiddles and the piano finished their tune with a flourish; the Prince of the Blood re-settled himself in his arm-chair, and the curtain rose upon a cottage scene wherein two members of the Strawberry Club, attired as peasant girls but wearing diamond rings, were scouring milk pails. They began to sing a duet descriptive of the charms of country life, new mown hay, daffodils, and white cows. Then a gallant Colonel disguised as a yokel came in and kissed them both, made them squeal, and danced a jig in their company. His clogs made a fearful row, and every time he brought one foot down with a bang, he exclaimed that he wouldn’t exchange his pigs and cows for a kingdom.



The young ladies answered by chorussing, "Who wouldn't be a milkmaid?" It must have occurred to many men in the room that it would be no bad fun to be a milkman if all milkmaids were fashioned after the model of these two.

VIII.

MRS. PRAGO AND MISS DAISY CAUNTER.

THE milkmaids' names were Miss Caunter and Mrs. Prago, the former one of the richest heiresses in Wales, the latter a lady whose first husband was still alive, but divorced from her. There had been some queer stories in Society about Mrs. Prago. Many people were undecided as to whether they ought to receive her into their houses. Some said of her "poor thing," others called her a jade. This evening's performance at St. Mellion House was, however, to have a decisive influence upon her destiny; for when it was seen how familiar she was with Miss Caunter, the most strait-laced were fain to own that there could not be much that was wrong in her.

Miss Daisy Caunter was known to be most particular in the choice of her friends. She had already refused some two dozen offers of marriage, generally alleging as a reason that the connections of her suitors were not satisfactory. This may or may not have been the real cause, but anyhow the young lady's well-known exclusiveness served as an ægis to Mrs.

Prago, who in truth had need of some such guarantee as to her respectability.

If the things bruited about Mrs. Prago were true, she had simply been bought of her first husband by her second, who had paid a good round sum for the purchase. To be sure her first husband was a sot, a gambler, a fellow who was often drunk, and Mr. Prago was a wealthy Portuguese of good family and fascinating address; but, however that might be, the divorce case of "Facey v. Facey" would probably have been followed up by the intervention of the Queen's Proctor, had that active functionary at all suspected under what circumstances the double charges of conjugal infidelity and cruelty had been concocted against Tom Facey.

Mowser, who was omniscient, pretended that Tom had received £1000 down and a pension of £400 a year to allow himself to be abused at Westminster by his wife's lawyers, and afterwards to betake himself to America, where he now was. He had let the particulars of this creditable transaction leak out during a fit of boozing. There was no inducement for him to set foot in England, for he would have forfeited his allowance, and £400 a year was of more use to him than a wife, as he candidly owned, being a truthful fellow at bottom.

Who would have guessed, from looking at Mrs. Prago, that she had such an awkward secret as the foregoing at her heart? No one; but the human

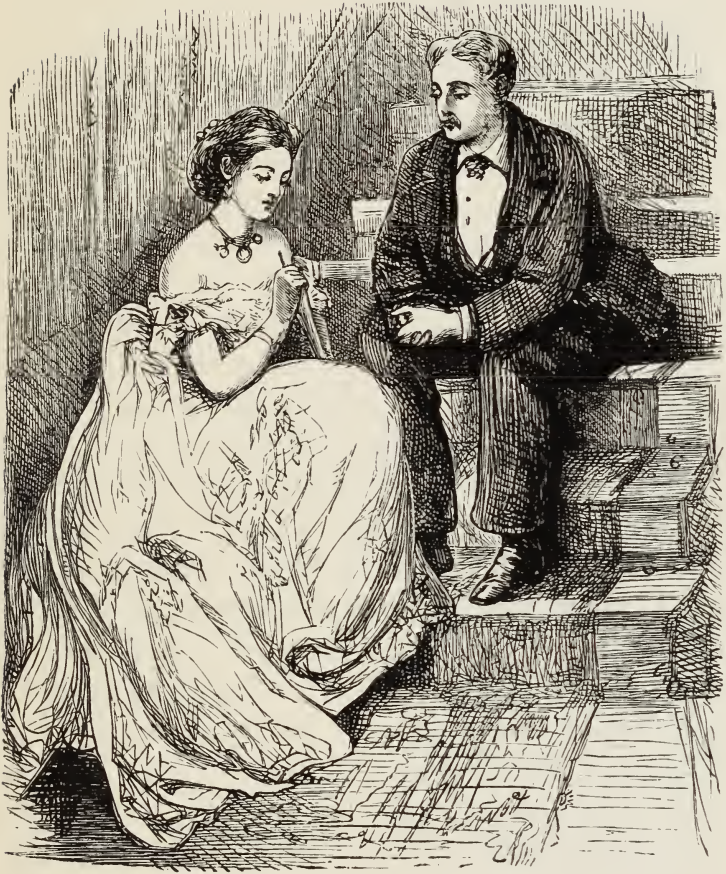
countenance is the safest of masks, especially with women. Mrs. Prago danced, laughed, and sang like the blithest of fairy-tale village girls, and Prago sat in his stall stroking his moustache and watching her with evident pride. They were an attached couple, and smiled at one another whenever their eyes met. They had been married three years now, but always went about together as during a honeymoon. Prago could speak English, and belonged to one or two first-rate clubs—a circumstance which had enabled him to pour into influential ears that version of his wife's first matrimonial career, which he desired to be circulated in Society. He was the most convenient husband a woman in Minna Facey's position could have married, for he cherished no British prejudices against duelling, and would at once have challenged any man whom he had heard had been talking lightly of his wife's fame. This was well known, and men were not only cautious themselves, but exhorted their wives to be so likewise.

In addition to this, Prago had presented his pretty Minna at the Portuguese Court, and had taken her the round of all the Imperial and Royal *soirées* in Europe before bringing her back to be presented at St. James's as the subject of a foreign state. The presentation at St. James's, however, never came off, for there is an implacable law at the British Court about divorced ladies, and the Lord Chamberlain was fain to return Mrs. Prago's cards with a word of polite—nay, almost humble—explanation destined to soothe the husband's

feelings as much as possible. Señor Prago could not call out the Lord Chamberlain, but this rebuff did his wife good rather than otherwise. Compassionate persons said it was a shame to taboo a woman who had only availed herself of the laws of the kingdom to get separated from an odious wretch, who would have bullied her to her grave had she remained united to him. If divorce was allowed by the statute book, why should the Sovereign set her face against it? This query remains unanswered to the present day, but it was the hard case of Mrs. Prago that first started it.

Mrs. Prago had such large eyes and pretty pouting mouth, spoke with so much softness and bore herself with such grace and dignified modesty, that even those who thought there might be some truth in the stories concerning her, utterly rejected Tom Facey's hiccoughing declarations that she had acted like a termagant towards him, and had been the chief cause of his going to the bad. The good-for-naught swore that he had been a promising youngster, till the day, when, being a subaltern in a marching regiment, he had been moved to elope with Minna. She was the daughter of a country doctor, and had fascinated Tom Facey at the time his regiment was quartered in the county town where she and her father resided.

The young lady had no fortune whatever of her own, and Tom had nothing to live on beyond his pay, so that he was obliged to borrow money upon his commission in order to defray the cost of their honey-



moon tour upon the Rhine. Soon afterwards he sold out, and wished to embark his little capital in some hotel speculation, of which he was to have the management; but Minna was for ever wanting new dresses, hired broughams, and pleasure parties. So long as Tom had a sovereign, she made him spend it

upon their joint amusement ; and when he was cleaned out, she sulked, wept, and made a martyr of him, till, by hook or crook, he had raised some more cash.

He tried his hand successively at a dozen things, in any one of which he might have succeeded eventually, had his wife been content to live frugally for a while. He accepted a secretaryship to a club ; wrote for the press ; took a share in a theatre ; started a comic paper and ended by going on the turf as a betting-man. He seemed to have a knack of making money, but his wife had a still greater knack for wheedling it out of him. And, however many guineas he might clear by one of his lucky strokes, they remained no longer in his pockets than water in a sieve. Tom had none of the stiffness that can keep a woman straight ; when his wife abused him for having seduced her into a life of beggary he bent his head and remained out of conceit with himself till he had contrived to bring home one of those hatfuls of money that always set Minna smiling afresh.

Graceful Minna—charming Minna—she could be the most ravishing of wives when she pleased ! but when things went wrong no wild cat could compare with her for spite. Poor Tom soon broke his health in his efforts to keep her in good temper, then he took to stimulants to recover tone, but recovered nothing except a little pot-valour, which emboldened him to tell his wife some plain truths and then to thrash her for not acknowledging them. These thrashings were

renewed once or twice but no more, for Minna learned to defend herself, and Tom occasionally appeared on race-courses with his face slashed all over with weals inflicted by the uxorial riding-whip. His next downward step was to be summoned to a police court, charged with committing an assault upon Minna whilst under the influence of drink. He had no distinct recollection of this occurrence, and used to swear that the charge had been concocted to give his wife an excuse for leaving him and setting up a ground for divorce. However, as Minna entered the witness-box with her arm in a sling and one eye black (with paint said Tom), and as furthermore she gave her evidence with gushes of weeping, saying she was sure she should be murdered if not protected against her husband's drunken excesses, the magistrate took a serious view of the charge and sent Tom to prison for six months with hard labour.

What became of Minna whilst her husband was in gaol picking oakum and exercising himself upon the treadmill? This the wretched convict never learned, but as soon as his time had expired he was met at the very door of the prison by a solicitor, who informed him that a petition had been lodged against him in the Divorce Court and that the already mentioned terms of £1000 down and £400 a year for life would be paid him if he agreed to let the suit go undefended. Tom had not a guinea 'in the world when this handsome offer was made him, and although he was dreadfully

enraged against his wife, yet as the rejection of it would not have benefited him in the least, he accepted it with more gladness than dignity and received a first instalment of his money on the spot. A few months later the case of "Facey *v.* Facey" came on at Westminster and resulted in a decree *nisi*; twelve months later this decree was made absolute, and Tom, who was by that time in New York, read in the papers that three or four weeks afterwards his late wife had become Mrs. Prago.

Such was the story as told by Tom himself, and Mowser in commenting thereon remarked that "Minna Prago was a finished type of the woman who, after marrying a needy man, repents of her bargain and tries to back out of it. All women of her sort are not, however, so clever as she; for to drive Tom to drink and then to get him put into a prison, so that all the wrongs seemed to rest on his shoulders, were strokes of true genius. Indeed women who played their cards so adroitly almost deserved to win the stakes; but it was none the less a queerish thing to see this slippery creature airing her modest graces in a polite society as if she had been a persecuted angel."

"It would be well if those odd adventures of hers were all true, but they must be taken *cum grano*," was our rejoinder.

"Ah yes, exactly," laughed Mowser. "Enormities are always incredible, so that when a woman kicks over the traces she had better jump clean out of





SCORNFUL DAISY CAUNTER.

harness at the same time ; plenty will be found to believe that she was never in harness at all. I suppose you apprehend that Prago will be shooting a bullet into you if you don't accept his own version of Minna's early life."

"Prago may shoot his bullets where he pleases, but his wife doesn't certainly look such a loose fish as you describe—nor does Miss Caunter ; by-the-bye, what's the scandal about *her* ?"

"None : only, like Margaret of Navarre, she might carry at her girdle the dried hearts of a full score of men whom she has taken up and cast aside."

"Are these gallants dead then ?"

"No, I believe one was idiot enough to take laudanum, but he was purged and recovered, and all the rest are alive and kicking."

"Where's the harm then ?"

"The harm consists in the awful amount of bad language which Miss Caunter must have provoked," answered Mowser with a grim smile. "Just totalize the number of curses which must have been emitted by men whom she has jilted. You consider that she is an heiress, she owns the third of a county, and the man who marries her will become a magistrate, a county M.P., and anything else he cares to be. The minx is pretty besides and worth winning for her own sake. She plays on the piano, rides straight to hounds, sings comic songs, and draws excellent caricatures in pencil or chalk. It seems that her favourite

method of signifying to a suitor that she has had enough of his attentions is to present him with a cartoon in which he is exhibited in a light at once



mercenary and ridiculous. I know a fellow whom she depicted in the act of scrambling up a greasy pole to reach a cheque book with her name on it."

“If she did that often, I should fancy men would all be aware of her tricks, and shun her like a pantheress.”

“Oh no ; men hide those facetious drawings, and don’t boast about them,” replied Mowser. “It was only by accident that I saw the one to which I allude, but Daisy Caunter has rejected half-a-dozen other men since that time, and may blow off a dozen more.”

“Until she gets tired of the fun and chooses——”

“A snob, with the stature of a heavy dragoon and the principles of a card-sharper ; yes, the thing generally ends in that way. Miss Daisy has been spoiled by novels which generally deal with masculine nature as with a blacking-brush ; but she also has the womanly fondness for independence, and knows that when she has parted with her liberty she will never enjoy the same social homage as she does now. At present, when she enters a drawing-room, conversations are for a moment hushed, and then a general hum of flatteries arise, which must tickle her ears like a spring breeze. There is scarcely anything that she might not do with the certainty of being absolved by her gold ; and that freak of hers in taking up Mrs. Prago, as she is doing, is only an outburst of her will to try her power over Society by every possible methods, even those which will earn her a character for eccentricity.”

“Why not attribute her patronage of Mrs. Prago to more charitable motives ?”

“Because it would be absurd to do so,” responded Mowser. “Daisy Caunter likes to show that she has a will of her own. She has not yet reached the phase of strong-mindedness; but she is sick with hum-drum things, and craves for sensations. She is in the state of mind for detesting shams, standing up for the weak, doing battle against prejudices. She will drop Mrs. Prago some day as capriciously as she has taken her up; for, after she has pushed eccentricity to the length of marrying a man whose name, morals, and manners will make Society gape, she will feel the need of redeeming her character. These pert heiresses who spend their first years of freedom in treading upon everybody’s toes, have to pass their after-lives in contriving that everybody shall not stamp upon their husband. Daisy is a despot now; when she has a wedding-ring on her finger she will turn slave.”

“Is that so sure? She looks too sharp a girl to make a silly choice.”

“Sharpness has nothing to do with choosing in these cases,” said Mowser. “If Daisy Caunter won’t content herself with a loose husband, she’ll have to go without, for she won’t get any decent man to court her, for fear of being snubbed. Though she has more fellows dangling after her now than ever, they are all semi-shady people; and if she is herself blind to this fact, that only proves how a girl’s perceptions get blunted when she exercises them amiss. An heiress starts with the notion that every man who courts her



DAISY CAUNTER AND HER CROWD OF ADMIRERS.

has an eye to her money ; she is often wrong, but she won't admit it, and goes on rejecting one man after another, till all who have any self-respect keep aloof from her. Those who remain in the field are the weeds and tares ; and when she eventually resigns herself to making a choice, her selection must perforce be made from among these."

The foregoing remarks of Mowser's had been uttered in a low tone, but as he had raised his voice a little towards the end, he caused a fidgety old gentleman near us to cry "Hush!" This made him lapse into silence, and he said no more until the curtain had fallen on the second Act of the Charade. We did not stay for the third Act, for these parties of the Strawberry Club were managed on the principle of packing spectators as close as sardines, and the amusement of hearing pretty women sing doggerel almost as well, or badly, as real actresses, was not sufficient compensation for the discomfort of being squeezed flat in corners. We retired while the Prince of the Blood was cracking his gloves in applauding Mrs. Prago and Miss Caunter, who had been called before the curtain : others retired with us, and thus it befell that as we were slipping on our overcoats in the cloak-room, a lady passed near us and heard Mowser ejaculate : " Well, have you seen enough Jilts this evening ? I think if we had overhauled the antecedents of every woman in the room we could have found enough to place each one in that category."

“Oh Mr. Mowser, how can you!” laughed the lady, who was a well-looking person of about thirty, with a dimpling chin and hazel eyes; and she shook her fan at the misogynist.

“Mrs. Bussel—I beg pardon,” said Mowser, reddening a little. “I had no notion——”

“I hope not,” she interrupted good humouredly; “what you have just said was not complimentary enough to be spoken to one’s face.”

“It didn’t apply to you at all events.”

“How do you know? I have perhaps jilted a good many men in my time.”

“I shouldn’t wonder if you had,” he laughed as he helped her to put on her cloak. “With pretty women it’s always a case of many being called, and but few chosen.”

“Only *one* chosen, if you please,” remarked Mrs. Bussel. “A woman can only choose her husband, and then, I suppose, all the other men claim the right to say they have been jilted.”

She was in her brougham by this time, for Mowser had escorted her out. He bowed, saw her off, and returned chuckling: “That’s Mrs. Bussel, a widow, who owns Lonestone in my county—one of the most consummate fishers of men who ever wore weeds.”

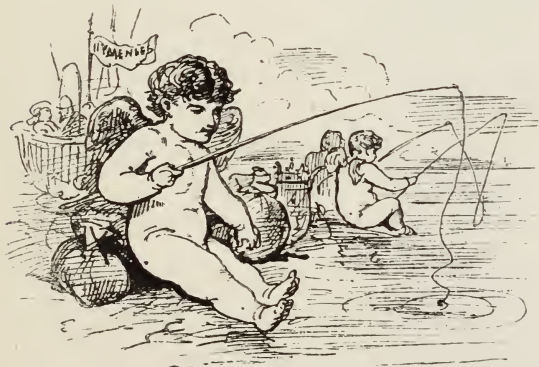
“She doesn’t wear weeds.”

“No: that’s only a figure of speech, but she’s a widow and rich, and I was once fool enough to offer her my empty hand, which she refused.”

“Not simply because it was empty, we may presume.”

“I don’t know for what other reason then,” replied Mowser innocently, as he put up the collar of his coat. “It’s a dry moonlight night—shall we walk? I’ll tell you as we go along something about this woman—and mighty glad I am that she didn’t take me.”

He seemed to speak what he felt. We lit our cigars, and as we strolled along over the white pavements towards Club-land, Mowser enabled us to add one more to our list of Jilts by his description of Mrs. Bussel.



IX.

A WIDOW WITH A NICE LITTLE ESTATE.

MRS. BUSSEL did not often come to London, but lived in so-called retirement in her late husband's country house at Lonestone. Lonestone was three miles from its post-town—a little market borough, very gay during its race-week, and dull the rest of the year. It was seven miles from a garrison town which had also a reputation for being fairly quiet. On the whole Mrs. Bussel resided in a pretty, agreeable neighbourhood, and took advantage of all the recreations it afforded.

For about ten miles round her house, the villages were made up of three or four hamlets, each with its gentleman's seat; and the fat grey horses and fat grey coachman were well aware that the length of their buxom mistress's visiting list would not disgrace a dweller in the metropolis. December and January were passed on the South Coast for fear of floods: in February the return journey was made *viâ* London, which implied a few visits and suggested an opportunity for asking a

few friends to find their way to Lonestone. It was too big for Mrs. Bussel, but one must live somewhere ; as she said : “ It was rather a drag on her powers, looking after men-servants, and trying to understand what animals want ; but her gentlemen friends were very



kind, only perhaps they did not like to tell her all they thought, and of course they could not take much real interest in a place not their own.” From such sayings hearers were soon led to infer that Lonestone wanted a master, and that Mrs. Bussel did so too.

All through the summer the house looked like a bower, with its garden beds in full bloom, and its



drawing-rooms fragrant with fresh-cut flowers. Little Mabel Wicks, recently brought out, came and stayed

a good deal there.—“No relation, you know, only a family friend, and I must find the dear girl some amusement,” said the widow; and on this pretence many a cheerful party was given at Lonestone. Mrs. Bussel was very fond of having as she said “a few quiet guests,” to dine with her—“just the clergyman and the doctor (who were both bachelors), and poor dear Willie Blayer. Dear me, though, I keep forgetting that I must not call him by his christian name now as I did when we made hay together!” Willie, as the widow styled him, was a native of the county, and had harboured intentions of going into the Line, but somehow settled into the yeomanry instead, and devoted himself to shooting all through the winter, and punt-fishing during the summer, as if he had received a standing commission from Providence to slay members of the brute creation in all weathers.

Mrs. Bussel evidently liked Willie, but she liked the doctor and clergyman too, and could not make up her mind which she preferred. She flirted with all three and by so doing incurred the implacable detestation of the parson's two sisters, who lived with their brother and never knew on what foot to dance because of the uncertainty in their prospects engendered by the widow's goings on. If the Revd. Septimus Dulcet married Mrs. Bussel he would make over his patrimony to his sisters and they would go to live at Bath. That was tacitly settled—not that the Misses Dulcet wished to leave their

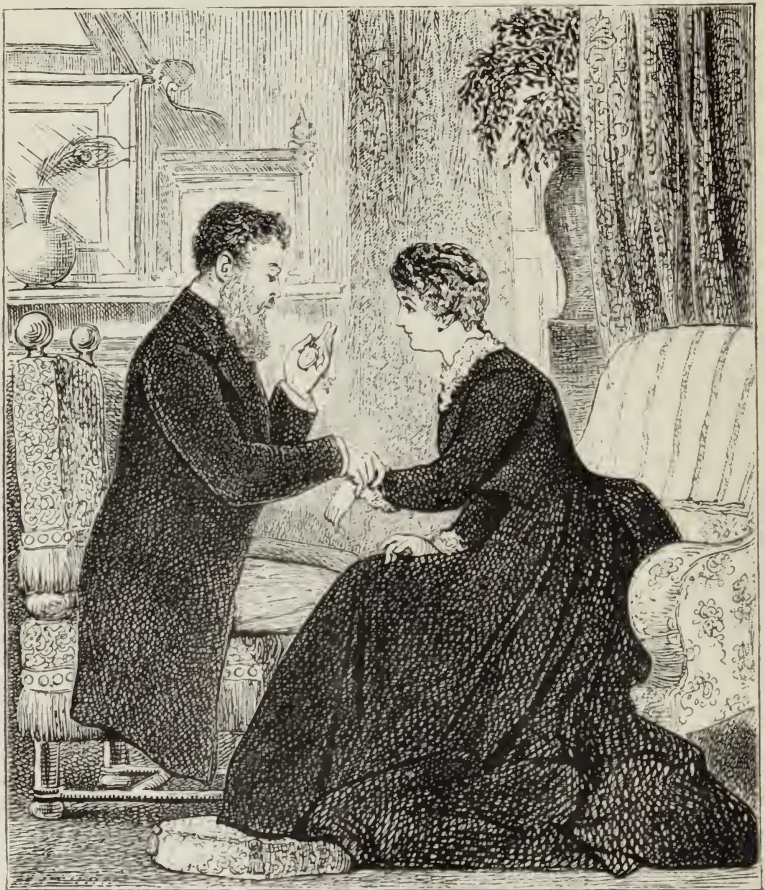
brother, but because they felt they could not live under the same roof as "that woman." More than once they urged their brother to push on his suit with vigour, so that they might know to what fate they were to be consigned—but he pleaded for time. He was a timid man and Mrs. Bussel so very—very much superior to him, as he modestly confessed. However he did take heart of grace, and one Sunday as the widow was complimenting him upon an excellent sermon he had preached "and which made her feel that he was such a good man," he popped the question—and was refused.

Mrs. Bussel did not mean to pain him, and perhaps the word "yes" trembled on her lips, instead of "no;" but she spoke the negative monosyllable because at the moment of parting with her liberty she hesitated, like a school-girl standing upon the brink of a cold bath in winter. The parson was terribly grieved. He held a white rose, which he had intended offering at the critical moment; but he frittered its petals on to the earth, and made his case worse by sighing with a sorrowful abstraction. Widows must be stormed, not besieged. The Revd. Septimus, who was verging on forty, looked mean and small in the character of a dismal suitor; and Mrs. Bussel could hardly repine for not having entrusted her hand to a man who showed so little spirit in struggling for it. However, when the two Misses Dulcet heard of what had happened their indignation was something to see. It

was only by piteous supplications that their brother persuaded them not to make themselves ridiculous by cutting the woman who had shown such effrontery—such heartlessness—such—such everything that was unladylike and shocking.

The doctor played his cards more cleverly with the widow, and was nearer to succeeding. He was a droll person ; had travelled a good deal, and seemed at home everywhere. He understood the widow's health, and prescribed her only such things as she liked. He paid her those blunt compliments which can come from a medical man without sounding like flatteries. She had a splendid organization, a remarkable intellectual development, a temperament which offered the happiest admixture of the nervous and sanguine without a particle of the bilious. Her pulses were regular as clockwork ; her breathing light and pure as a child's. He had never seen any woman with such limpid eyes, and such a beautiful skin. What a pity it was that she had no children—the boys would have been strong as young lions, and the girls perfect little angels for beauty.

All this was delightful ; and as the widow had a tendency to plumpness, it could not but flatter her vastly to see this tendency ignored by her able doctor, who, far from prohibiting pastry, butter, porter and such other things as the plump do hanker after, maintained on the contrary that her robust health required rich feeding. Of a truth, there were days when, holding



the widow's white and well rounded wrist to feel her pulse, the doctor might have made it his for ever by stooping to press a kiss on it; but his too great caution withheld him from compromising himself, and consequently made him lose many a propitious occasion. He could never forget that Mrs. Bussel was his best patient,

and that if he were rejected by her they might possibly quarrel, which would lose him a valuable connection. The widow on her side often balanced in her mind the disadvantages of becoming a doctor's wife. If he adhered to his practice he would be called out at all sorts of unseasonable night hours. If he gave it up, what would he do with that abundant stock of energy which was always impelling him to frisk about and chatter? He knew nothing of agriculture, and so would be of little use in managing the estate. If he stayed in-doors and busied himself about household matters, he might become a fidget.

Nevertheless, when Mrs. Bussel eventually refused the doctor, it was only because he chose his time badly. He committed the sovereign imprudence of proposing to her while she had a headache, and whilst he himself looked much greyer and harder than usual, owing to a drive through a black frost. It suddenly struck the widow that her amiable physician was getting to be quite an old man, and that possibly a great deal of her time would have to be spent in nursing him. An untoward allusion of his to some incipient rheumatics which made him anxious for rest, sealed his fate and made Mrs. Bussel reject his offer with a laugh, saying she was sure he was only joking.

There remained the young squire, who devoted himself to shooting and fishing; but Willie Blayer had not the qualities which moneyed widows are prone to snap. He went little into Society, preferred the company of

his dogs to that of women, and would miss an appointment to dinner for the sake of having a try at the gudgeon and perch in a pelting rain. His pockets were always full of fishing-tackle, and he used to bring, unconsciously, from his kennels squads of alert little insects, which would dart unseen from his clothes on to those of persons whom he honoured with his visits. Then too, Willie was fonder of beer and pipes than becomed a lover, and it was rather a drawback than an advantage to him that he was heir to an entailed estate and had no need to work for his living.

Mrs. Bussel did not want a rich husband. One of the pleasures which she hoped to derive from a second marriage was that of enriching some accomplished man who but for her would never have enjoyed *otium cum dignitate*. If she had married Willie Blayer, that agreeable cub would be no better off than he was now, and would have no occasion to feel that he was much indebted to her. These reflections began to force themselves on the widow so soon as she saw that Willie was paying her his court, but doing so in such a languid fashion as to suggest that it was immaterial to him whether he were accepted or not, so long as her preserves remained open to him every September and October.

Mrs. Bussel did not fancy being wooed in this fashion. She thought to fillip the young squire's gallantry by telling him that a man ought to have some purpose in life, and that she for her part would

never marry one who had not distinguished himself in some way—the which remark, making Willie shy as a November partridge, caused him to seal his lips for evermore on the question of matrimony. In vain did the nettled widow seek to draw him into a new offer: he would not be drawn. He continued with a provoking coolness to shoot her covers: he brought her



presents of fish, and one birthday gave her a poodle-pup as a token of his esteem ; but beyond these lines of conventional amity he would no more trespass than a poacher on to grounds where man-traps are set up.

All this was very disheartening, and the worst part of the matter was that Mrs. Bussel, having exhausted her list of selections by refusing the three most eligible men in her neighbourhood, got noted as a flirt and Jilt far and wide. The doctor, the parson, and the latter's two sisters all bit up her fame with little pecks, and were joined by a whole covey of women who were as jealous of the widow's charms as of the luxuries of her pretty estate of Lonestone. Mrs. Bussel began to feel conscious of a decline of the public regard for her : just as though the atmosphere around her had grown chilly. She got men to accept her invitations, but they evinced a disinclination to be left alone in her company. At the county assemblies, at magistrates' meetings, and at hunting meets it had grown a standing joke to ask : " Who'll marry Mrs. Bussel ? "—and men were positively afraid to get entrapped in her toils, lest they should have to encounter the chaff of a whole county for having made a mercenary match.

A chatter-box maid of the widow's carried the rumour of these abominable pleasantries to her mistress, and the effect upon Mrs. Bussel was as of a bucket of iced water dashed upon her head. Nothing but a season in London and a triumphant return with a



MRS. BUSSELL CHAPERONES MISS MABEL WICKS.

husband culled from among the *fine fleur* of Society was capable of restoring her to her pedestal. She felt this at once and acted upon the resolution without a moment's delay. It was spring. A fuller crimson had come upon the robins' breasts, the wanton lapwings were getting themselves other crests, and the *Morning Post* was filled with columns of "Fashionable Arrangements," extending to the end of July. Mrs. Bussel packed her trunks, and accompanied by her young friend Mabel Wicks, to whom she meant to act as chaperone, came to London bent on the same errand as Diogenes: namely, to find an honest man. She went a good deal into Society with her young charge and had been absorbed in her quest for a couple of months or so, when Mowser and ourselves had the pleasure of meeting her at St. Mellion House.

Mowser could not be drawn into confessing where and when his own love passages with Mrs. Bussel had occurred. As they had ended in discomfiture he seemed sore upon the subject, and confined himself to saying "that he had been deucedly ill used, as usual." However, a few days later, chancing to fall in with him at a garden party, we learned from him that the fair owner of Lonestone had at last found a husband. That accounted for her good humour on the evening when she had exchanged jokes with him about jilting. She had been at that very moment on the eve of betrothal to a barrister in first-rate practice, who was on the high-road to a judgeship or the post of attorney-

general. Mowser opined that he was going to marry for the sake of getting into Parliament through her landed influence. He was only using her as a stepping-stone.

“Say rather a stepping-cushion, and a pretty soft one,” was our laughing remark.

“Oh, the luck is all on her side,” said Mowser, in a pool-pooling tone; “but Jilts are lucky, somehow. I only wish Mrs. Bussel’s husband joy of his bargain.”

“Depend upon it he won’t find the grapes so sour as you do, Mowser.”

“Well, my teeth *are* on edge, I confess,” answered the misogynist; “nor can I find any of that sweetness in women of which poets boast.”

“You should turn poet yourself, Mowser, and write a satire against them.”

“I have rhymed an ode in my contumely of the entire sex, and will show it you if you like.”

“Pray do, instanter.”

“No, not now, by-and-by. There is the charming Miss Boulty and the equally seductive Mrs. Rippenham waiting for you to play croquet with them. Go and be charmed, whilst I move to the refreshment tent.”

X.

AN UNMERCENARY PAIR OF JILTS.

WE were at a garden party on the banks of the Thames at Twickenham, and our hostesses were again the members of the Strawberry Club, who had hired a villa in these parts for the whole season, and gave *al fresco* entertainments in its grounds when the weather was fine. The amusements were lawn tennis, croquet bowls and tea-drinking. When dusk came on, the gardens were lit up by the moon, or failing that by an electric light which shone like it. Then the Strawberry patronesses and their guests had the choice of dining in flowered arbours, or in a sumptuous dining-hall overlooking the lawn.

Dinner hour was still far off and we played a game of croquet with Miss Boulton and Mrs. Rippenham, who were sisters. They were a blithe-hearted pair, and pleased one by an absence of all affectation. They had large circling eyes full of innocency, and lips that were always ready to smile. They talked much about men, and little of women, which is a sign of charity, for women as a rule only allude to their own sex to abuse it. They knew all about the prowess of this

one and that at cricket, in the saddle, or with the gun. They could count all the good waltzers in London on their fingers ; and would laugh outright in mentioning the foibles of such and such a man whose head turned with dancing, or who shirked a five-barred gate with the hounds, or straggled about unsteadily on the ice—or who was in fact a “muff” in any way.

They passed most of their time in witnessing athletic amusements. They could themselves swim, ride like Amazons, and even bring down a woodcock on the wing. These were their qualities, but in other respects they were not intellectual sisters, and cared not a hair-pin for high-art, poetry, or music—other than dance music and the marches of military bands. They read sporting novels and turf newspapers. They pleaded guilty to not knowing how to draw flowers or talk French. The English they spoke was terse, vigorous Anglo-Saxon—spiced rather than adulterated with bits of hunting-field slang, but quite exempt from languid Society embellishments. They were never caught saying that a thing was “quite too nice.”

One distinguishing peculiarity in these amiable beauties was, that they accounted no man love-worthy because of the money he possessed. They made fun of Lords as of the humbler mortals of creation. They loathed cotton lords, and retired meat-salesmen who sought to cut a figure in Society, and had such a general contempt for “money bags,” as to think it an

additional merit in a man, if, being a pleasant fellow, he had empty pockets. The reason of all this was that Mrs. Rippenham had originally jilted a banker to marry a "detrimental" dragoon, and had been rewarded by a thumping legacy from an aunt who admired her pluck in marrying for love against parental advice.

Such things do not happen every day, but Mrs. Rippenham had drawn from her good luck the moral that honesty is the best policy in love and in other



matters, and she had inculcated the same on her sister. Polly Boulby, who was scarce turned eighteen,

desired nothing better than to believe so consoling an axiom. She lived under her sister's roof, was chaperoned by her in society, and received daily encouragements from her brother-in-law to cast her eyes about for a man she liked, then to ticket him "Sold" and appropriate him. This joke used to make them all laugh every morning at breakfast. While cracking his egg Captain Rippenham used to say: "Well, sister Poll, have you found your phoenix yet?" to which Polly Boulby would answer saucily: "A phoenix isn't necessary, Dick—else Jenny would never have married *you*."

The sincerest misogynist—if any of that brood *be* sincere—must have felt his prejudices thaw at the contact with these unconventional sisters enjoying their game of croquet like school girls, and quite unabashed by the circle of admiring men who stood around muttering audible eulogies on their play. Jenny Rippenham had a science all her own for driving her ball through the hoops by a series of steady matronly strokes; Polly Boulby was better at sending an adversary's ball bounding far over the lawn. There was a whole volume of the poetry of motion in the way in which she raised her skirts a little in order to disengage her foot, poised her mallet, and with a firm clicking stroke successfully achieved her "croquet."

She laughed gleefully every time she got an opportunity of doing this. Certes, she was none of your



POLLY BOULTBY AT A CROQUET PARTY.

bread-and-milk misses who are afraid to disturb the symmetry of their silken summer costumes by over exertion ; or who feel afraid to humiliate a man too much by beating him markedly at a game of skill. It is common enough, by-the-bye, to see a man seriously annoyed at having the shine taken out of him by a girl. Men like to show courtesy by letting women have the victory in garden games ; they do not always care to see them take it by sheer superiority, as Polly Boulton did. There was not a country parson who could match the joyous girl with the mallet ; and she could vanquish mere amateurs so thoroughly that they looked foolish. But their foolishness gave her no more concern than their compliments. She was just a chip of the same fine-grained block as her sister, who had jilted a millionaire young banker to marry Dick Rippenham, who at that time had very little beyond his pay.

Jilting presupposes amatory encouragements ; how came it then that Jenny Boulton, having first encouraged the banker—nay, plighted her troth to him, if rumours were true—ended by turning her back to him, although he was neither old nor churlish ? Possibly Jenny cared little for money, and that was why Fortune, by a humorous revenge, afterwards threw a whole shower of it into her lap. She could not have been a common-place girl, for the banker had been making himself agreeable to her for months before she met Dick Rippenham. It was not therefore as though

she had known this dragoon from childhood, and cherished him for "auld lang syne." They two met at a garrison ball, where they danced twice under the young banker's eyes—"And oh, how he waltzed!" said Jenny afterwards to her sister. Another ball came not long after, and they waltzed again; then followed a carpet dance somewhere, and the spell was made perfect.

Dick Rippenham proposed during a stand-up supper, whilst he held a plate out of which Jenny was eating raised pie, and her answer was to look up at him without letting go her knife and fork, and to say: "O, how shall I manage about Mr. Bullion? Papa and mamma will be so angry if I throw him over."—"Never mind, I'll make it all right with him, and with them too, if I can. The only drawback is that I haven't a penny."—"Nor have I," said Jenny.—"I suppose we shall rub along somehow," rejoined Dick, laughing.—"I'll do my best," was Jenny's answer.—And so the compact was sealed soon after in a dark corner of the conservatory, where Dick gave his charmer a kiss, and asked her to return it—which she did, nothing loth.

It is thus not an universal rule that girls can always be caught by a golden hook. There are some exceptions—many exceptions; and, indeed, feminine natures seem to have been cast on purpose by Providence in such diverse moulds that man shall never be able to base any general theories on them. If there are girls



JENNY BOULTBY AND CAPTAIN RIPPENHAM AT THE GARRISON BALL.



to whom poverty seems a bleak house, there are others to whom it has no terrors, for they trust in their powers to make it tolerable. Jenny Boultbody would not have minded any of the domestic inconveniences from which some other of the ladies whom we have sketched recoiled. She would have stitched and cooked if need be, and made suet dumplings taste good by her smiles in serving them. She was full of little helpful devices to make pence do double duty, and her husband looked back to the time before her

aunt's legacy had arrived as the happiest in their married life.

She wore no trailing gowns in those days, nor five-



guinea bonnets. She consented to travel in third class carriages, and rather liked it because of the odd fellow-passengers whom she was enabled to study. She stinted herself of gloves that her husband might

buy cigars, and he clandestinely saved up his cigar money to buy her presents. On fine evenings they used to go out arm in arm and look into the shop windows, wondering what things they would buy if they were rich ; and when it rained they sat at home, Dick reading the paper aloud, while Jenny did some piece of needle-work, and made comments. There had never been an hour's tiff between them ; never a secret which one kept from the other. Jenny used to open Dick's letters if he were not at home when the postman came ; and she never wrote to either parent or school-friend without reading him what she had written. The money they inherited added to the luxuries of their life, but not to their happiness ; for they had everything that they wished for in the consciousness that they were all in all to each other, and had truly got wedded—as so many do not—for better or worse, for richer or poorer. All who knew them were freshened by the sight of their pleasant, trustful partnership, and said without exception, that while Dick was a lucky fellow, Jenny was not the less a lucky girl.

So we, too, thought, as we watched them side by side during this game of croquet, while Polly Boulby disposed of our ball in her usual manner by sending it to goodness knows where. But presently the evening shadows overtook us, and the game had to be abandoned. The musical chinking of forks and spoons in the dining arbours announced that the convivial hour

was approaching, and we made a move towards the villa. Just then the irrepressible Mowser joined us, and we asked him in a whisper what he thought of Poll Boultyby? He thought a good deal about her. The damsel did not overhear the cordial things he said in acknowledgment of her fascinating powers, else she might have concluded that such homage coming from a professed contemner of the sex had something too personal in it. She would have been wrong, though, for Mowser's praise was by no means unrestricted.

Whilst we were in the lavatory splashing our hands in basins deep as wine-vats he launched into one of his paradoxes on the eternal danger of trusting to appearances in women. Their hearts were weather-cocks and veered about with every passing wind. To-day Jenny Rippenham and her sister were worshippers of the beef and muscle order of mankind—shindy churl who developed their biceps at the expense of their brains—but how would it be in ten years time? If Mrs. Rippenham became a widow she would not choose her second husband from among the athletes, but give herself to some book-worm who would speak a language new to her ears and irresistible from its novelty. As to Polly, she had no doubt, in her heart of hearts, already taken a surfeit of the amusements she affected to love and was preparing to startle her family by jilting half a dozen batsmen, polo-players, dead shots, and steeple-chasers. There would be

nothing odd if she married a curate or one of those cads who write funeral odes for the comic papers.

“If that be your idea, Mowser, why don’t you put yourself on the ranks?” we asked, rubbing our hands cheerfully on a huckaback. “Poll Boulty would make you a capital wife. Her cheerfulness would be a set-off against your melancholy.”

“I’m not melancholy a bit,” protested Mowser. “A man who has been frequently jilted gets bronzed. There isn’t a woman alive who could make me feel a pang now.”

“That’s a bit of brag, isn’t it? But you have never yet explained how you came to be so often jilted; for after all you are a decent fellow.”

“And good looking, and rich, having two coats,” laughed Mowser quoting Dogberry. “Go on; when you’ve painted me *couleur de rose* throw on some ochre for relief.”

“Oh yes; you’ve some yellow in you too. You look at women with such a jaundiced eye that they can’t but see you’re over-critical, and *that* women don’t like. *Plus on juge moins on aime.*”

“I deny being over-critical. When I used to fall in love I gave my sweethearts credit for quantities of perfections they had not got. I was the very image of Cupid with a handkerchief tied over my eyes.”

“Well, that’s about the same thing as being too critical; for if you begin by transforming a woman into a goddess she may dread the day when, the hand-

kerchief having fallen off, sudden disenchantment may kill love. Why not take women as you find 'em?"

"I do and have always found them Flirts and Jilts."

"Try again."

"No: ten times bitten—once shy," replied the misogynist, furbishing his face with a towel. Then going to his coat, which hung on a peg, he extracted from its tail-pocket a folded paper. "See here," said he. "Here's that little bit of rhyme of which I spoke to you. It sums up my experiences of the sex, which is adorned by Lady Tryon and Mrs. Prago, Miss Caunter and Mrs Bussel. Read and be warned."

We obediently unfolded the paper and read :—

I'm forty, and never was spliced :
 Pray what do you think is the reason ?
 The hearts of the women are iced ;
 They're made up of witch'ry and treason.

I was twelve when I courted Kate Spence :
 To this day at her mention I writhe, oh !
 My love for the maid was intense ;
 But she left me for Charley Bolitho.

At twenty I spooned Jenny Dunn ;
 I still have her hair in a locket :
 She allowed that I'd faith, health, and fun ;
 But there was not enough in my pocket.

I vowed not to love any more,
 And for three years my promise I kept, sir ;
 But before I was quite twenty-four,
 Again in love's meshes I'd stepped, sir.

Lily Haggis has broken my peace ;
 Polly Round on my heart put a blister ;
 I've been caught by a general's niece,
 And hooked by an adjutant's sister.

Four daughters of merchants and clerks,
 Four daughters of priests and attorneys,
 With their bright eyes have kindled the sparks
 That have flamed in my heart like a furnace.

Now I live in a cottage and dig,
 And have no matrimonial fetters ;
 And I'm wearing a curly white wig,
 All made up of shreds of love-letters.

So I swear that I'll never be spliced,
 And I think you'll admit I've good reason ;
 For the hearts of the women are iced,
 And their witch'ry's a mask for their treason.



ADVENTURERS AND ADVENTURESSES.



I.

OF THE GENUS GENERALLY.



VERY circle of London Society has its Adventurers of both sexes who live by preying upon people of a credulous turn. Let any man having a large number of acquaintances reflect a moment, and if he be in the least observant, he will perceive that one or two of them are not precisely as they should be. There is a something about them which makes them different from other

people. They have interesting stories to tell about themselves, they are brilliant talkers, uncommonly amiable, full of plans or expectations. They have no recognised means of livelihood—neither estates, nor stocks, nor shares; no salaries or pensions—but they are going to get a good deal of money at some time or other, through legacies, or the realization of important and strictly honest financial schemes. Meanwhile, they live in free style, and are known to be anxious to contract small loans, bearing high interest, and secured by their words of honour. It never astonishes the observant man when he hears that these interesting persons have exploded.

But all men are not observant and suspicious, so that the more clever Adventurers generally carry off a good deal of plunder when they vanish from the scene of their brief triumphs. For their careers as Adventurers are always brief. They live at such a pace that they must come either to fortune or to disgrace quickly. In the former case they cease to be Adventurers, and join the ranks of the very *élite* of creation—those who have succeeded in life by their own talents, and for whom everyone has an admiring word to say; in the latter event their fall may carry them downwards to any depths. It may be remarked that the difference between success and failure is often the result of the merest chance. The most trifling accident, such as a careless act, an untruth prematurely detected, a whisper from someone whose suspicions

have been excited, has brought the Adventurer to the ground just as he or she was about to soar successfully.

It is much easier for a man to succeed in adventuring than it is for a woman. Woman's sphere of operation is limited. It contains a few concentric circles on one or other of which she must always turn ; and the risks which she runs of being stopped before she has completed her rounds are many. Man's range is practically unlimited, and the chances of his success or failure are pretty evenly balanced.

Adventurers form an innumerable host, if one reckons in their ranks all the men who start in life with no assured means of income, and who have to make a path to fortune for themselves by their unaided wits. But we are chiefly concerned here with Adventurers of the more unscrupulous species. To be sure they are all, more or less, unscrupulous ; but there is a difference between the Adventurer who only aims at living in decent comfort, and the one who aspires to win wealth, or a commanding position rapidly. The former's objects are perfectly legitimate, and the latter's are generally held to be so when he has attained them ; but not when he fails. In this event, the brilliant Adventurer is always regarded as the sorriest of rogues.

II.

MATRIMONIAL ADVENTURERS.



NINE-TENTHS of the younger sons of our aristocracy may be said to be Matrimonial Adventurers. They have been brought up to enjoy the same luxuries as elder sons, and if they marry at all, they must find wives who can maintain them in suitable ease and dignity. The Hon. Sylvan Keane-Forrester, the Earl of Oldmoor's fifth son, had these maxims impressed upon him by a sagacious mother almost as soon as he could walk. He was his mother's darling, and he grew up to be the handsomest of his well-favoured family. He went

to Eton, and then into the Guards. His father allowed

him £500 a year, and promised to leave him that income by will; but added that he could do no more, for his eldest son, Lord Chevy Chase, was a very expensive young man to keep. Sylvan was quite aware of this, and knowing that he had nothing further to hope for from his noble father, made it the business of his life to look out for a nice girl with money.

Why he failed so often it would be difficult to say, for his manners were perfect, and he had no more conceit about him than women like, yet he was so frequently refused, that his ill-luck became proverbial, and secured him a scandalous reputation. Girls seemed to have entered into a league against him, and when it was seen that after having been rejected by one, he turned, without any fuss or remembrance of former vows, to another, it was said, with a certain show of reason, that he was an arrant flirt, and had no heart at all.

His mother thought that he simply lacked discrimination. He took his shots without measuring his distances. He would propose straightway to a girl whom he had known but twenty-four hours, whereas if he had waited a little he might have been accepted. The best of the young fellow was that he never fretted over his disappointments. To the unspeakable annoyance and spite of the young ladies who had refused him, he addressed them with the most cheerful familiarity whenever he met them, and was quite



callous to reminders of the threats he had made to hang himself if he were not accepted.

It came to pass ultimately that Lady Oldmoor told her pet son that these goings on must cease; and he quite agreed with her, for he owed several thousands of pounds and his purveyors were growing clamorous.



Among them was a tailor, who had lent Sylvan money besides supplying him with clothes ; and he began to talk of taking legal proceedings, and making his debtor bankrupt—a step which would have quite spoiled the latter's matrimonial chances. Just about this time Sylvan went down to Brighton for a few

days, and at a subscription ball held in the Pavilion he danced with a very pretty girl, who, somebody told him, was an heiress.

The name of this pretty girl was Dobson and the name of Sylvan's tailor was Dobson, but the young man had not the slightest idea that there would be any relationship between the pair. He met Miss Dobson on the day after the ball in company with her mother, and went with them to the Pier to hear the band play. The young lady casually mentioned that her father was a merchant, and frequently alluded to his estate in Wiltshire, his horses, and pictures. On these hints the handsome Sylvan prolonged his stay at Brighton, paid his addresses, and a fortnight after his introduction to Miss Dobson, he proposed to her and was accepted. But accepted only with the proviso that the engagement should be kept secret for awhile, for Miss Dobson felt by no means sure that her father would consent. The truth is the poor girl, who had grown fond of Sylvan, was terribly afraid that Sylvan himself would break off the match when he discovered that her father was his tailor.

Sylvan, fancying that Miss Dobson's aversion to publicity arose from the fact that his character did not stand well in the eyes of the Dobson family, proposed a clandestine marriage, and was delighted at the alacrity with which this suggestion was accepted. A licence was procured, and one morning the Honourable Sylvan Keane-Forrester and Miss Emily Dobson were

married at St. Nicholas's, with only the clerk and a pew-opener as witnesses. Sylvan left the church with a happy feeling of having done well for himself at last ; but his exultation did not last long, for the bride had telegraphed to her father just before the ceremony, and taking her husband to her home towards luncheon time, she introduced him to his new relative. The interview may be more easily imagined than described. The expression on the Honourable Mr. Forrester's face, as his pretty bride unceremoniously pushed him into the tailor's arms, was certainly a thing to be seen and remembered of.

Sylvan found a consolation for his mistake in the double circumstance that his bride was both a nice young woman and very rich ; but all his relations set up a fearful clamour, and the whole aristocracy on hearing of the matter was stricken with unbecoming mirth. Lord Oldmoor vowed at first that he would break the rascally tailor's bones ; but he became somewhat pacified when Mr. Dobson consented to retire from business and settle down as a country gentleman. As for Sylvan, he deemed it expedient to leave England with his young wife, and sojourn for a few years in Italy. There he changed his religion and his name, for high influences and liberal donations obtained for him the title of Count of the Holy Roman Empire from the Pope. Few persons who pass by the splendid Biscotti Palace at Rome are aware that the lordly owner, Count Biscotti, is none other

than the Honourable S. Keane-Forrester, who had proposed to about twenty daughters of dukes, earls, and wealthy baronets, before marrying the daughter of Dobson the West-end tailor.

There was some irony of fate in that the proudest of the young ladies who had refused Sylvan—Lady Myra Tantallon, the Earl of Clanmarch's only child—married not clandestinely, but in the broad light of day, Charley Toppe, one of Sylvan's schoolfellows, and a nobody.

Charley Toppe was the younger son of a successful barrister, who was himself the son of a curate, offspring of a grocer. Charley's portion was as slender as his pedigree; but he was a merry-tempered stout-hearted young man, with a few splendid manly qualities. He was one of the best cricketers of the day, he rode straight to hounds, and his muscular strength and pluck were wondrous. He had fought a prize-fighter and thrashed him. In some foreign hotel having been appealed to to protect an English lady, who was annoyed by the gallantries of a foreign officer, he had caught that officer by the seat of his pantaloons and pitched him out of a ground-floor window, sword, spurs and all, in the presence of a room full of people; and afterwards, by way of giving his victim "satisfaction," he had met him in single combat and sliced one of his ears off.

Such exploits as these render a man dear to the



THE HON. SYLVAN KEANE-FORRESTER PITCHING THE FOREIGN OFFICER OUT OF THE WINDOW.



female bosom, and Lady Myra Tantallon, who was a romantic admirer of muscularity, fell in love with Charley Toppe, simply from hearing people talk about him. Charley, on his side, was a deep young fellow,

who had made up his mind from the first to marry well ; but he did not make himself at all cheap. He knew better than that. He wanted his marriage to be a square, solid settlement, quite above board—a thing that should give him promotion in the sight of all mankind ; and to this end, once he saw that he had well hooked Lady Myra's heart, he played with it as coolly as he sometimes did with big salmon in Scotch rivers.

She would never have been suffered to marry him had he not done this. He had to drive the girl half-mad with love, jealousy, and anxiety in order that her father might favour the match, from fear of seeing his daughter die. Even, however, when the Earl intimated to him, through third parties, that there would be no opposition to the marriage, Charley was very prudent about the matter. He said that he was a poor man, who valued his good name, and would not incur the reproach of being a fortune-hunter. He had never aspired to the honour of an illustrious alliance. He deeply admired Lady Myra, but she was too much above him, and so forth.

Everybody who heard of this, were loud in their commendations of Mr. Toppe, who had behaved, they said, with extraordinary delicacy, and Lord Clannmarch, transported with admiration, actually went to Charley's chambers one morning and besought him with tears in his eyes to "waive his scruples" and marry Lady Myra : "Egad, my boy, the poor girl will pine away



CHARLEY TOPPE AND LADY MARY TANTALLON.



if you don't," said the old Lord, as a last wistful argument.

So Charley gave in. But to appease his honourable susceptibilities, and put him in an unimpeachable position before the world, Lord Clanmarch got him elected to Parliament, prior to the marriage, and caused him to be appointed a Junior Lord of the Treasury. He moreover contrived that an old kinswoman of his, who was dying, should leave Charley a legacy on condition of his assuming the name and arms of Tantallon. So Charley made a pretty good thing out of his diplomating. This wedding at St. George's was a most brilliant affair—choral service and a bevy of beauteous bridesmaids—and nobody grudged the bridegroom the honours which appeared to have been thrust upon

him in despite of his modesty. He was one of those Adventurers who certainly deserved success.

There are other classes of Matrimonial Adventurers, including of course the brazen Hibernian fortune-hunter, who advertises his long descent and brawny proportions in the columns of staid English seaside newspapers, in the hope of fascinating some well-dowered scraggy spinster, or buxom widow in possession of a nice little estate. Here is one of these gallant effusions, culled from the so-called "Visitors' List" of a fashionable watering-place on the southern coast.

MATRIMONY.—An Irish Gentleman, age 35, of tall handsome figure and dark complexion, wishes to correspond with a LADY of means with a view to above; age no object. A Protestant. Highly connected; Ancient lineage; found in Burke's Landed Gentry; Strictest secrecy.—Apply, with real name and all particulars (including amount of income), to The O'Mulligan, Blarney Castle, County Cork.

Another class of Matrimonial Adventurer commences by graduating as a spendthrift and finally develops into a keen fortune-hunter. When however he has managed to bring down his game, he commonly finds he is not allowed to bag it, his reputation being so notorious that fathers and guardians prudently insist upon the strictest settlements, and tie up every penny of the lady's fortune so tightly that he is unable to touch it. And it is as well that they do so, for with

men of this stamp old habits are not easily eradicated; in their book of life new leaves are not readily turned over. The married Adventurer of this type may be to all appearances at the head of a large establishment, and the seeming possessor of any number of carriages and horses, besides hunters for his own particular use, and yet those who are unsuspecting enough to trust him rarely succeed in getting paid even the most trifling claims, if the debtor by hook or by crook can possibly escape from them.

Quite recently an Adventurer of the above stamp was committed to prison for six weeks by a county court judge, for having neglected to pay a comparatively small debt incurred for horse fodder, and for which judgment had been obtained. On the case coming before the Queen's Bench Division on appeal, the following amusing colloquy among the big-wigs on the bench ensued:—

MR. JUSTICE MEADOW: I frequently have this kind of distressing case before me. The debtor generally belongs to three or four clubs, attends Ascot, Goodwood, and Epsom, and goes everywhere to enjoy himself, but says he has nothing whatever of his own, and only lives upon an allowance made to him from a wife or brother or some other relation. It is really too cruel that a person of this kind should have to go to Holloway Gaol because he has not paid for the feed of the horses which he hunts.

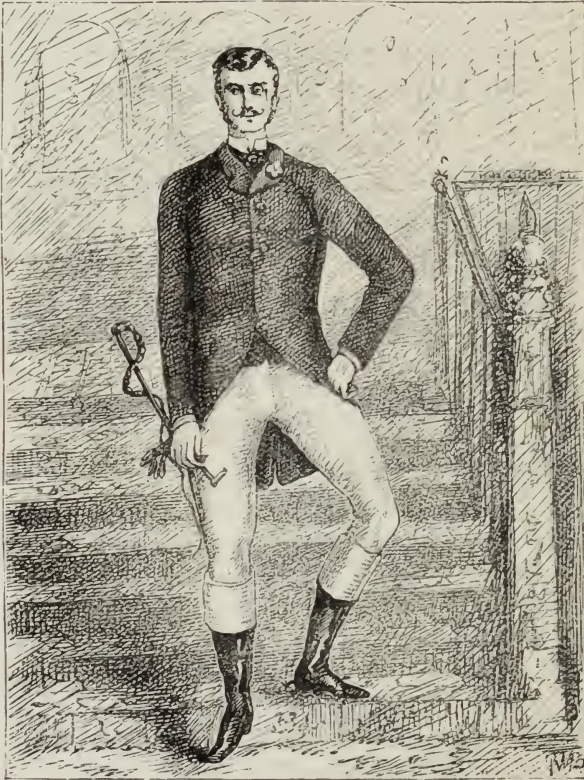
BARON MUDDLESTON: His wife supplies him with a hunting coat and breeches, I suppose.

MR. JUSTICE MEADOW: And yet will not give him a penny to pay for the goods supplied by the plaintiffs.

MR. STARCHIBALD, who appeared for the debtor, said his client's affidavit set forth that he was adjudicated a bankrupt in

1874 and had not yet obtained his discharge, and that during his bankruptcy he had not acquired any money or property of any description whatever ; that his wife had money settled upon her for her separate use, and he had no interest whatever in it.

BARON MUDDLESTON : It is a cheap way of doing things—to obtain food for his wife's horses without paying for it, and to ride them in the hunting field. The amount paid for the debtor's



hunting coat, breeches, and pipeclay would be more than sufficient to pay this debt.

MR. STARCHIBALD : My contention is that the debtor has no money whatever, as he is still a bankrupt.

MR. JUSTICE MEADOW : And probably will continue so to the end of his days. I never realised before what a great advantage it is to be an undischarged bankrupt. He cannot have any property of his own, yet he may order goods and enjoy them, without paying for them or being sent to prison.

BARON MUDDLESTON : This is a picture of things as they are. A man may live in luxury and splendour after having settled all his wife's property on her, and, becoming a bankrupt, need not pay anybody.

The lowest class of Matrimonial Adventurer is unquestionably the vulgar bigamist who dubs himself "Captain" and prefixes "Honourable" to his ignoble name. One of these smooth-tongued scoundrels, aged no more than 35, lately made his sixth appearance before one of Her Majesty's judges, by whom he was sentenced to five years' penal servitude. During his comparatively brief career he had married no less than five wives, among whom were the daughter of a baronet and a ward in chancery, and had dissipated whatever property his unsuspecting dupes had brought him. He had been tried three times for bigamy, twice for forgery and perjury, and had been divorced from three of his five victims at the time of this forced interregnum occurring in his criminal career.



III.

LORD COOKHAM, THE JOINT-STOCK COMPANY CHAIRMAN.



MUCH cannot be said in favour of Lord Cookham, who has won a great fortune by very shady methods. Lord Cookham is probably as dishonest a scamp as any to be met with inside gaols: but one must not say this too loudly, because he is a peer; and English-

men do not like to see a Lord attacked.

The truth about Lord Cookham is that his grandfather almost ruined the family property. His father tried to build it up again by dint of great thrift and prudent investments, and earned a character for honesty and steadiness by so doing, so that the next Lord Cookham—the one with whom we are concerned—started in life under favourable auspices. He succeeded to his title when he was just thirty, and found himself comfortably off, but no more. He had not run up many debts during his father's lifetime, for the old

Lord had looked rather sharply after him, and had kept him out of mischief by getting him a post in the diplomatic service.

The consequences of this strict training were very valuable to Lord Cookham by and by, for though he had expensive tastes, an inbred thirst for wealth—not for wealth's own sake but for the pleasures it affords—he inherited his coronet without having in any way smirched his name. Had the old Lord been less vigilant his heir would almost certainly have come to trouble. As it was, the latter on succeeding to his property, soon found that his clear name was of more profit to him than all his acres.

In the diplomatic service he had learned to dress well and to be cautious in speaking. He had a smug, impenetrable face; distant manners, and a knowledge of men and things that was not deep but pretty extensive. He never gave straightforward answers; his letters were short, courteous, and couched in phraseology which always involved the writer's meaning in some doubt; when he spoke he carefully guarded himself against the expression of downright opinions, but canted in vague terms about the public welfare, the spread of faith and the advance of science. In his politics he was a Liberal, which is the most convenient designation for a man to assume when he wants to change nothing and to be well spoken of by the newspapers.

Lord Cookham was just the man to shine as chair-

man and director of joint stock companies. He sold his name to the promoters of such concerns on conditions which were ingeniously fraudulent. He used to take the number of shares necessary to give him a qualification; but the value was always privately handed over to him in hard money, and he received a number of other paid-up shares as well, which he invariably disposed of as soon as they were at a premium. The moment one of his companies began unmistakably to totter he would retire from it on the score of ill-health or in consequence of a difference with his co-directors, in which he always contrived to get the advantage. Practically what he did was to swindle the public coolly and systematically.

During the early and palmy days of a company, Lord Cookham was generally put up to address the shareholders at their meetings. The sight of a smug-faced, soft-spoken Lord, who affected the straitest principles of morality, and had apparently a genius of no common order for figures, never failed to have its effect on these dupes. Lord Cookham, however, had no talent at all for figures. He understood women, good living, and music; but could not have done a sum in rule of three without a mistake. His financial speeches were all learned by heart beforehand at the cost of great intellectual labour, and his lordship could not deliver them without frequent reference to well classified notes. The delivery of them, however, was always admirable in its way—so much so, that there was a common

delusion abroad that Lord Cookham was one of the ablest financiers of the time.

Two railway companies which were at war actually chose him as arbiter in their dispute, and the written judgment which he gave forth (and which had been prepared for him by an accountant's clerk) was often quoted as a model of terse reasoning and shrewd reckoning. Lord Cookham received a fee of a thousand guineas for his arbitration, and he gave the accountant's clerk—a clever young man—the odd shillings : namely, £50.

It was a wonder that the cunning creature was never found out. Almost all the companies which he helped to launch were rotten, and expired early ; yet his name never suffered a taint. Meanwhile my Lord, heaping up plundered money, devoted his private life to sensuality of the grossest kind. There was no more profligate debauchee than he in London ; he revelled indeed in refinements of costly vice. In eating and drinking also he was a strangely well constituted *gourmand*, keeping both his stomach and palate in capital working order, so that no indigestion ever troubled him. Lord Cookham lived only for self-indulgence ; or one might say lives, for this noble person still flourishes and prospers at his old trade. His name came out as chairman of a new company only yesterday ; and his steward has just sent an order to France, for twenty dozen of twenty year old claret of the Château Lafite brand.

IV.

A FINANCIAL ADVENTURER, BARON DONEHAM.

LORD COOKHAM conjured with his coronet—a simple Baron's coronet, but an English Baron's, and consequently a much safer receptacle to beg the public monies with than any foreign head-dress of the same sort. Baron Doneham's coronet was of German make, and bore about the same relative value to Lord Cookham's as German silver does to English.

Baron Doneham was said to be a German Jew, named Abnehm, who early in life came to seek his fortune in this country. After toiling for some years as clerk in a City counting-house, he made a successful speculation with some savings, and having thus amassed a little capital, resigned his high stool, and settled down to speculation as a business. He had a better head for figures than Lord Cookham, though he had not the latter's advantages of rank and character. He had a plausible tongue also, with which he could always persuade distinguished people in Society to make money for themselves by assisting *him*, when they ran no risks. Mr. Doncham—who had assumed the name of his English wife, but had

not yet become a Baron—made foreign concessions his *spécialité*. Travelling about the Continent, he used to interest himself in the wants of divers cities. He would ascertain that here a new harbour was needed, there a line of rail or tramways, and upon this he would enter into relations with the local authorities. He mostly learned that money alone was required to complete the works which the city needed ; but that rates and taxes being already high, the authorities feared to draw any further on the local purses. Then Mr. Doneham, *né* Abnehm, used to say, “Supposing I got the thing done with English capital ?”

The proposal was always received with enthusiasm, and Mr. Doneham used to return to England to float a company, with the promise of a concession in his pocket. It was never difficult to get a company floated. There are ever so many gentlemen in London, like Lord Cookham, willing to sell their names for a fair consideration ; and of speculators ready to advance money for public works abroad, there is evidently no lack either. To do Mr. Doneham justice, he actually did supply two or three foreign cities with tramways ; others he paved, while others he lighted with gas. The swiftness of his operations, and the business-like way in which he silenced local opposition by squaring troublesome malcontents, soon won him a reputation, so that he was enabled to plume his wings for higher flights. He went in for great harbours then, and for

foreign loans. The City rang with his name. A German Grand Duke for whom he did a little financing on easy terms, created him a Baron, and conferred on him an Order of knighthood, with a red riband like that of the Bath. Baron Doneham hired a grand mansion in Belgravia, and, by lavish expenditure, got himself returned to Parliament, to be unseated, however, on petition for having been too liberal in treating the free and independent burgesses of the borough he sought to represent, on the eve of the election.

His name was at that time connected with about twenty companies, and he was in the full tide of success. Many called him the financier of the age. It was thought that he would end by eclipsing the Rothschilds. His ante-rooms were filled with dusky diplomatists from South American Republics, who wanted to raise loans in order to open up communications between gold mines and the sea-coast, and who offered any rate of interest to prospective purchasers of scrips. To Baron Doneham himself these diplomatists offered gifts of all kinds, excepting money—decorations, signed commissions in blank to generalships, consulships, ambassadorships, medical diplomas, &c. ; and the Baron privately accepted some of these offerings, as they were useful for distribution amongst humbler Adventurers whom he turned to account and who came to beg them of him.

After several years of prosperity, Baron Doneham



felt mighty enough to build a suburban palace on the site of an old mansion which had once housed the favourite of a king and in recent times had degenerated to a private mad-house. In the rear of the grounds surrounding this mansion was a rookery of the lower class of Irish, which had long been the plague-spot of the aristocratic suburb. Baron Done-

ham not only coveted the ground on which this rookery stood, but desired to disembarass himself of his inconvenient neighbours, and with this view, opened negociations for buying up the interests of both leaseholder and freeholder. He managed to secure the property on easy terms, for the rents were collected with nearly the same difficulty as though the land itself, as well as the tenants, belonged to the Emerald Isle, while as for ejecting the immigrant bog-trotters in a mass, he would indeed have been a bold man who would have ventured on so dubious a proceeding.

As soon as the deeds were signed, the new landlord called a meeting of his tenants, and after treating them with whisky in moderation, proceeded to address them as follows: "My friends," said he, "you have of course all of you heard, that I am now your landlord, and no doubt you have also been told by evil tongues that I mean to deprive you of your homes, where some of you drew your first breath, and imbibed your mothers' milk when infants, and were dandled on that loving mother's knee. (*Suppressed snivels.*) I say they lie who tell you this! (*Cheers.*) Instead of depriving you of your homes, I mean to give them to you—give them to you out and out, for nothing. (*Renewed cheers.*) Aye, for nothing! And not merely to live in, but to be your own absolute property. (*Frantic cheering.*) Every stick and brick, every beam and plank, every pane of glass, every sheet

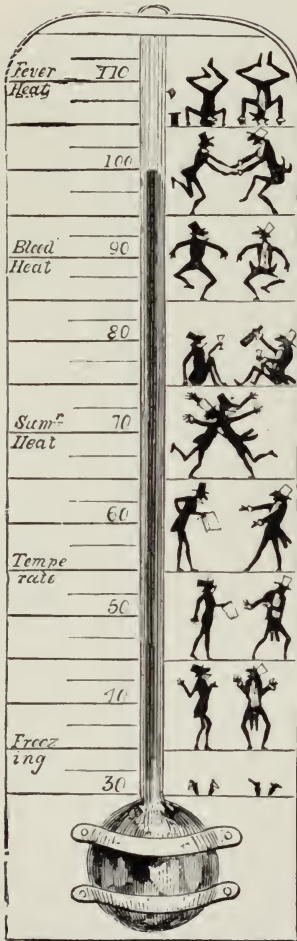
of lead, every hundredweight of iron, every foot of piping, every lock, bolt, bar, and water-butt, are yours, to make the most of! You all of you know the best market for these things, so don't delay. Pat, Mike, Tim, and Larry, borrow a pick or a crowbar, every man of you, and set to work, this very night if you like, or if not, early to-morrow, and before sunset put as many golden sovereigns as you can into your pockets. Depend upon it, it will be the very best day's work you have ever done in all your lives. So fire away, as soon as you please, and may luck and the Virgin's blessing be with you! Now then, three cheers for old Ireland." (*Cheering accordingly.*)

This ingenious harangue answered its purpose, and had the effect of not merely ridding the Baron of his undesirable neighbours, but he got the ground cleared for nothing, whereas a contractor would have charged him several hundred pounds for the job.

The imposing structure reared by Baron Doneham, with its surrounding charming grounds, would certainly have stood comparison on the score of splendour, if not of taste, with any palace of prince or peer in the neighbourhood of London, As if to show how endless his resources seemingly were, the Baron about the same time presented the metropolis with the freehold of a neglected piece of ground, which at great expense he had converted into a handsome garden, adorned with statues and busts of national celebrities. Very soon after, however, his prosperity

and credit all at once collapsed like an overblown balloon.

The Baron himself had a very narrow shave. Some of his gigantic speculations had turned out badly for the shareholders, who sought to prove that the prospectuses issued with the object of captivating their confidence were fraudulent. Some lawsuits ensued, and the Baron was ordered to refund large sums of money. He is believed in the main, however, to have done very well for himself, although it was never given him to inhabit the splendid palace which he had caused to be built in an hour of exulting vanity. It was in fact the fate of this gorgeous building literally to fall beneath the auctioneer's hammer, and to be disposed of piecemeal for a mere fraction of its original cost.



THE SHAREHOLDERS' THERMOMETER.

V.

“A PROFESSIONAL GREEK”: BRILLIANTI BEY.

THOUGH Englishmen profess to have little respect for foreign titles, it is curious to observe how readily they get dazzled by them. Brillianti was clerk to a Greek currant merchant, and seems to have made his start in life by embezzling some of his employer's money. Having thus provided himself with the necessary funds he made the round of the German Kursaals in their flourishing days, and operated by turns at “roulette” and “trente et quarante” with varying success. Eventually he turned up in Paris, where he was detected sharpening at cards in a club of doubtful repute. Being ejected thence,—but not too noisily, for the club did not want any scandals,—he flitted off to the seaside, and distinguished himself at divers casinos, where his manual dexterity at “bac” and “nap” and similar games caused the authorities to beseech him rather urgently that he would take himself off to other climes. Brillianti, being a dangerous rogue, in fact, was warned out of one casino after another, and finally his name was entered permanently on the books of the French police as that of an habitual criminal.



This did not prevent him from succeeding very well in London, when he came there usurping the Turkish title of pasha. Turkey was then *à la mode*, and Brillianti with his supposed anti-Russian proclivities was made a welcome guest in the houses of eminent "Jingoes." Although the amplest information could have been obtained about him from the police of Paris, nobody entertained the slightest suspicion that the rascal was a Greek, by nationality as well as by profession.

He secured admittance to some good clubs, and to houses where high play went on. There are ladies in London, who, while deriving no profit from the



gambling that goes on in their drawing-rooms, enjoy the society of gamblers, and allow them to play for what stakes they please. Brillianti found himself one evening at one of these houses, and he won £1000

there. The Russian Ambassador was among the losers present; but unfortunately for Brillianti, another of the losers happened to be one of the astutest men in London—a gentleman of property, politician, journalist, editor and wit, and noted beyond everything for his fearlessness. This gentleman, who is indeed nothing if not courageous, startled Society by denouncing the irresistible Brillianti as a swindler. Brillianti fired up at this, and finding many friends among simpletons, he thought good to institute actions for libel; but as he heard that his adversary was collecting damning evidence against him he decided not to await the issue of the trial, and left England. He was proclaimed a rogue by solemn verdict during his absence.

It is to be remarked, however, that Brillianti might very well have succeeded in making a large fortune among the unsuspecting set to whom he had managed to get introduced, if it had not been for his exceptional ill-luck in bringing himself under the immediate notice of a curiously sharp man of the world. Brillianti Bey was one of those who trip up over a piece of orange-peel at the very turning point in the race of life. No unfrequent accident, this. It is especially common among those who make their "running" on the card-table or on the turf.

The latter class of Adventurers is so numerous, that the type of the genus has become too common to require special limning. From the peer to the welsher

there are thousands of men who live on the hazardous gains of the turf, and try to correct the chances of Fortune by sheer swindling. Most of them appear to succeed, for one finds them year after year at the same races, and though they may often be heard complaining that they have been “hard hit,” yet they always appear to have money enough to pay for expensive drink, and all that tends to their amusement. Now and then a welsher comes to trouble for the matter of a few pounds, and is kicked off a course with every mark of contumely. Now and then a man of name becomes a defaulter for several thousands, and retires to France or America, where he begins his old games afresh, and in the majority of instances contrives to live pleasantly enough. It is with turf adventurers as with other kinds of money-hunters, the little rogues who try for small gains, generally have a worse time of it when they do shabby tricks, than the big rogues, whose mal-practices involve the gain of thousands.

And to sum up the whole matter, the worst rogues of all amongst Adventurers are generally those who succeed, and who come to no sort of harm. We find them in every walk of life, and lift our hats to them. They are very powerful, and might knock off our hats if we did not render them this homage.

VI.

THE COUNTESS D'ORENBARRE.

SOME seasons ago many people were duped by a lady with the above high-sounding title. She suddenly appeared in London with good letters of recommendation, and two handsome daughters of marriageable age. She rented a furnished mansion in South Kensington. She was said to belong to the family of Lord Skillalee, an Irish peer of ancient lineage, and her husband was a French nobleman who had been Minister Plenipotentiary under the Second Empire. The Countess was a Roman Catholic, and many of the letters which she brought were from foreign prelates, who lauded her virtues to the members of the Romish hierarchy in England. By these means the Countess quickly became acquainted with some very good families, and was in a position to patronize other families of less exalted standing, who, seeing her on familiar terms with peers and Cardinals, invited her to their houses, and considered it an honour that their hospitalities should be accepted.

The Countess was extremely condescending. She



accepted most invitations, and seemed to have a predilection for *nouveaux riches* and comfortably established people of the upper middle class—solicitors, merchants, bankers, and stock-brokers. Such people, of course, made more of her than members of the

aristocracy could be expected to do. It gave them a pleasurable thrill to see the Countess's well-appointed carriage and pair with its coronetted panels, and its powdered footman, clatter up to their doors; and they took it very kindly of the Countess that she should nod to them in public places, and procure them invitations to houses which they could never have entered on the strength of their own connections.

The truth is, the Countess d'Orenbarre had not a penny. Her husband, the "diplomatist" was an upstanding fact; but he was neither Count nor ex-Minister. He was simply Monsieur Orenbarre, who had been French Consul in Siam; but having lost that appointment, had gone away, none knew whither, to seek his fortune, and had left his wife and daughters to shift for themselves.

As for Lord Skillalee, he was certainly connected in a distant way with Madame Orenbarre, *née* O'Flinn, and he good-naturedly allowed her to make the most of the connection when he heard from her coaxing lips (for she was a fine woman), that it would help her to establish those dear girls. But then Lord Skillalee believed in the countship and the diplomatic services of Monsieur Orenbarre, and he thought that the Countess had some money. Had he known the facts of her history, he might have been more cautious about introducing her right and left as his kinswoman, and promising to do the fatherly towards her daughters if either of them got married during her father's absence.



LORD SKILLALEE INTRODUCING THE COUNTESS D'ORENBARRE AS HIS KINSWOMAN.

For the Countess kept on saying that her husband had gone on a private mission from the Court of Rome to conclude a Concordat with the King of Rangoon, and was likely to be engaged for a year or two in this difficult politico-religious business.



To get her daughters Maria and Stella well married was of course the great object of the Countess's life. She had landed in London with just £300 in cash, which was all she had in the world except her luggage and jewels. She had to run into debt for everything

she wanted, and she knew that under such conditions as these she could not keep up her grand style of living for more than a season at most, unless she chanced to make some very lucky haul, for people require a certain amount of ready-money even when they live by a general system of indebtedness.

The Countess set eyes on one of her new friends, an enriched tradesman, who seemed a good-natured sort of person, and confided to him that some remittances which she expected from Rangoon were a little late, and that it would be a great convenience to her to have £500, for the use of which during six months she would pay six per cent. interest. The *nouveau riche*, who, through the Countess's influence, had secured an invitation for himself and family to a garden party in a ducal mansion, offered £1,000, and thought that he was doing a good stroke of business, six per cent. being high interest in these our times, when, no matter however hard-up individuals as a rule may be, the City articles in the newspapers are constantly reiterating that there is a perfect glut of money in the market.

The Countess lodged the money in an aristocratical bank, and from that time things went on pretty smoothly with her. Her cheques inspired confidence, and she took care to circulate them in a good many directions, in order that if it suddenly became expedient to fly, she might find plenty of people willing to cash her drafts, and thus provide her with journey-money.

To such a woman as the Countess £1,000 in a good bank represented a potential £5,000 of capital.

But those dear girls of the Countess's gave her trouble. They would not go off. They were pretty, vivacious, keenly alive to their own interests, and fearfully eager to be married, and yet they were foolish, for they were sentimental, and would not show as much amiability to one man as to another. They wanted to marry rich men, but they were anxious that these men should be "nice," and they were somewhat exacting on the score of niceness. Maria, could not bear fat men or men who looked as if they were going to be fat; and Stella, on her part, disliked men who smoked.

Had the fond mother been cognizant of these reprehensible prejudices, she would have combated them with authority; but the girls were scarcely aware themselves of the feelings that were in them. Instinctively Maria behaved coldly to fat men, while Stella showed signs of discomfort when approached by men whose clothes were perfumed with tobacco. The fat men and the men who smoked could not understand it. They said that the girls gave themselves airs, and by their reports they scared away from them a great many well-disposed lean men and an equal number of men to whom tobacco was odious. This was a pity, for any lean man with a dark, drooping moustache and £10,000 a year would have found in Maria a loving wife, whereas Stella could have made

herself positively delightful to any millionaire willing to abjure regalias for her sake.

The Countess ended by seeing that there was something wrong, but, conscience pricking her, she supposed that men were backward in paying court to her daughters because her own status was not above suspicion. This made her nervous, and induced her to romance about the extent of her husband's fortune in order that people might imagine that Maria and Stella were heiresses. This device succeeded. A young and very gentlemanlike clerk in the War Office, with a slender



figure, and a moustache that left nothing to be desired, found constant opportunities of being in the society of the Misses d'Orenbarre, and eventually proposed to the eldest of the two sisters; whilst a young vicar who smelt of incense and eau de Cologne made an offer to the youngest after meeting her once at a garden party. Both these gentlemen, who were very nice, had heard that the Misses d'Orenbarre would have £20,000 apiece, and by way of proving that they were not fortune-hunters they gave themselves out as young men of good expectations. The truth however was that the clerk had a salary of £500 a year and the vicar a living worth about the same amount, and that there was no prospect of any important increase to these modest incomes.

The Countess had hoped much better things for her girls, but the season was drawing to a close, and to get them married to respectable men of any sort was now her prime consideration. The saddest part of the business was, that the girls were not aware of their mother being an Adventuress. They of course knew that the Countess had now and then been in straits for money; but as she kept them well supplied with new dresses, bonnets, gloves and pocket-money, they had a misty belief in their father, the "Minister," whom they had not seen since they were little girls, but whom their mother described as busily engaged in making a fortune.

The Countess had been wise in not taking her girls

entirely into her confidence, for by doing so she might have rendered them either too nervous or too bold. As it was, Maria and Stella both entered innocently into the Countess's plot, and spoke about themselves to their respective lovers as having plenty of money in prospect. The lovers, having made misstatements on their own accounts, were of course wary of pushing their investigations too far, lest their own circumstances should be too closely inquired into. They were chiefly concerned to get married as soon as possible.

So the double wedding took place. Lord Skillalee gave away the two brides, and made them presents. Other distinguished people had sent gifts, and altogether the wedding was a very gay and auspicious affair. Nobody who saw the Countess d'Orenbarre at the breakfast could have suspected that she was just then at the last extremities of impecuniosity, and on the point of taking to flight.

Yet such was the case. As soon as the two bridal parties had started for their honeymoon tours, the Countess packed up her own trunks and disappeared, none knew whither. A month later, her two sons-in-law, on their return to London, were made acquainted with the facts of the case, and had to face this dilemma. Their mother-in-law, before bolting, had raised money right and left by means of her cheque-book, having signed no end of post-dated drafts, which at her urgent entreaty had been cashed by acquaintances, tradesmen and others on their being assured

that she was in daily expectation of remittances from Rangoon.

The Countess had collected nearly £2,000 in this way, and she had also made money by pawning goods obtained by her on credit, and especially jewelry which she had caused to be sent to her on approval, with a view, as she had said, to choosing presents for her daughters on their marriage. Altogether, the Countess's debts in one direction and another were found to amount to about £5,000, and it became a question for her sons-in-law whether they would pay this sum or see her brought back from the Continent on an extradition warrant to meet a charge of wholesale swindling.

As the two sons-in-law had been calculating upon receiving £20,000 apiece, their sensations when they learned the full truth may be imagined. They called on Lord Skillalee, and asked him what he meant to do by way of saving the honour of the family name? Lord Skillalee would have been glad to do nothing at all; but he had compromised himself by standing towards the Misses d'Orenbarre *in loco parentis* at their wedding; and so, after a great deal of profane swearing, he was induced to put his hands into his pockets to avoid a scandal.

The sons-in-law, on their own parts, had to pay up, to do which they were compelled to appeal to their relatives, to borrow money, and to mortgage such slender expectations as they really had; but somehow the thing was done, and the Countess escaped

punishment. She lived abroad on the spoils she had carried away; and when last heard of was doing very well at Nice, keeping open house, where a good deal of high play went on at nights.

As for Maria and Stella, they have had to exercise their womanly wits in smoothing the ruffled feelings of their respective husbands. Luckily, their husbands had grown fond of them, and they of their husbands, so that matters did not turn out quite so badly for the little dears as they might have done.



VII.

LADY GOLDSWORTH AND THE HON. AGNES ROSA
MATILDA VENEER.

THERE is a lady now shining in London Society who began life under the queerest auspices. A dozen years ago she was a barmaid at a public-house in the Strand. Her name was Kate Hathaway. A professional bookmaker took a fancy to her, and proposed that she should accompany him to the different towns of the kingdom where race-meetings were held ; but he explained that he was unable to marry her, as he was already provided with a wife, who was “ cruising about somewhere,” neglecting to give him her address. Kate took the place of the cruiser ; but after spending some months in the bookmaker’s company, the superior advantages of travelling about the country with a rich young Baronet, who had a stud of his own, became demonstrated to her. She left Tom Sharp, the bookmaker, without any unnecessary fuss, and her desertion drove him to bad language and brandy-and-water ; for he had got to be very fond of her, and in contemplation of marriage, had paid a Private Inquiry Office to ascertain the true Mrs. Sharp’s whereabouts, in order that he might regale that



quondam partner of his betting profits with a citation in the Divorce Court.

Tom Sharp would have married Kate had she waited a little ; but she preferred to go off with Sir Frank Galloway, a most entertaining patrician, who could imitate comic actors, and used to make her laugh till she cried, by standing upon his head, and balancing champagne bottles on the heels of his boots. Sir Frank and she remained united six months ; but one day, the Baronet having winked at another young lady in her presence, she was so justly offended, that

she immediately commended herself to the protection of young Lord Nuffe, aged twenty-two, one of our hereditary legislators.

Lord Nuffe, though he helped to make laws for us, was thought by his family to be not quite right in his wits. Kate could easily have become Lady Nuffe had she pleased. His lordship made overtures to her on this subject, being doubtful whether the charms of his society would be sufficient of themselves to fix the pretty wanderer permanently to his side. The Dowager Lady Nuffe heard of the matter, and at once despatched her brother, General Pepper, to bring the odious girl to her senses, or else to offer her money to take herself off, no matter where, so long as it were out of Lord Nuffe's way. It would not have been easy to bring Kate to her senses if she had been fond of Lord Nuffe; but it happened that the General arrived just as she was yawning miserably, after having heard his lordship repeat the names and qualities of all his dogs to her three times over, to show what a good memory he had.

Lord Nuffe had just gone out when the General presented himself, looking at once fierce and timid like a man of the world who knows that women are the most awkward of enemies to face. A glance at Kate showed him that if fighting was in question he would find a "game" adversary, and this discovery made him civil. He offered money, and the Lady Nuffe *in posse* accepted it with business-like readiness. Some idyllic

notion was just then floating in her mind of going off to live for six months at Margate, where she had an aunt who kept an oyster-shop and let lodgings. Here perhaps she might find some respectable young man to marry her and join her in opening a public-house, with a handsome luncheon-bar nicely fitted up with plate glass and gilding; for to become mistress of such an establishment was, at this moment, one of her fondest dreams.

Sentiment has many strings; and the sentimental fibres of Kate's heart were most easily stirred by recollections of the innocent days when she worked the handles of a beer-engine. Her hankerings after innocency being indeed strong at the time when General Pepper called upon her, she obliged that warrior to give her more money than had been contemplated either by himself or the Dowager Lady Nuffe.

"The sum you demand is very large," exclaimed the General, aghast.

"You may please yourself about paying it," replied Kate, coolly. "If you don't I shall marry Nuffe, and turn out old Lady Nuffe from Nuffe Hall as soon as I get there. I shall also cut down the wedding portions of Nuffe's sisters, for I know they are dependent on him. In fact I'll play old gooseberry all round."

"You talk as if you were sure Lord Nuffe would marry you; but remember that is by no means certain.

He would doubtless yield to his mother's remonstrances."

"If you believe any such rubbish as that why come to me? I think I shall marry him after all. He is a very nice fellow and I'm growing quite fond of him."



“You said just now you did not care a snap for him.”

“Yes I did just now ; but this money dispute with you has made him more precious to me ; and I’ll tell you what, General, if you don’t at once accept my terms, he will have become so dear to me in five minutes’ time that I shall double them.”

The General in alarm took the hint, and signed a cheque for which Kate Hathaway gave him a receipt. The same afternoon, as per agreement, she took the train to Margate, leaving the unsuspecting Nuffe in the lurch.

At the close of a six months’ sojourn at the favourite cockney watering-place, Kate Hathaway had grown pretty tired of her aunt and of the latter’s oysters and lodgers. She then steamed off for Australia. This was a sudden resolution taken on the spur of the moment, and at the instigation of a young man with hazel eyes and a brown moustache named Walker, and a commercial traveller in the wine trade. He had saved a little money and was going to emigrate to Queensland, where he meant to open an hotel ; and he suggested that if Kate would join hands and funds with him they might do a good stroke of business. Kate agreed to the voyage ; but she prudently adjourned all decisions about matrimony until she should have travelled long enough with her companion to see how she liked him. For propriety’s sake, however, the pair were entered on the passenger list as

Mr. and Mrs. Walker, and Great Britain heard no more of Kate Hathaway.

But a couple of seasons ago, a rich Australian, Sir Michael Goldsworth, suddenly appeared in England, astonishing Society by his profuse expenditure. He had been a gold-digger, a sheep-farmer, a Prime Minister in a colonial Cabinet, and he had got knighted for his spirited policy in the latter capacity. He was no sooner in England than he bought a town mansion, an estate assumed to have belonged to his ancestors, a stud of race-horses, and a constituency; he was elected to Parliament, and became popular at once by his hospitalities.

Sir Michael had a charming wife, who dressed well, talked well, rode well, danced well; and who was much run after. This wife was none other than Kate Hathaway, who soon after landing in Australia had parted company with Mr. Walker, and had paid a respectable elderly widow to chaperone her and pass her off as Miss Spring, the orphan daughter of a Queensland sheep farmer. Sir Michael had married her, fully believing that she was of Australian pedigree.

London Society was not likely to inquire strictly into the matter. Everyone knows that it would not do to be too particular about the pedigree of Australians, so that when people had ascertained that Lady Goldsworth's maiden name was Spring, and that she was the daughter of a rich colonial landowner, all had been learned about her that sensible people had ex-



pected to know. Lady Goldsworth's christian name was Mary, but somebody flatteringly christened her the

Queensland Daisy, and by that name she became generally alluded to. It was not a very appropriate name : for one associates the daisy with rustic simplicity, and there was nothing at all rustic or simple about Lady Goldsworth. Her beauty was of the kind which shows to best advantage with rich attire ; and her conversation disclosed a taste for town rather than for country topics.

Thus, although Lady Goldsworth was supposed never to have visited England until she came to settle there with her husband, she evinced a surprising acquaintanceship with things English and especially with racing matters. She also knew a good deal about the byways of London and Margate. Little particles of this knowledge, which she pretended she had acquired in reading, used to escape from her at unexpected moments, when she was in high spirits, causing her hearers to marvel at the close attention with which she must have perused books and newspapers. But Kate Hathaway had dyed her hair and in eight years her features and figure had got somewhat more matronly ; so that she was almost unrecognizable to old acquaintances ; and yet not entirely so.

One evening at a ball Lady Goldsworth had for her *vis-à-vis* Sir Frank Galloway, the gentleman who used to balance champagne bottles on the heels of his boots. He started when he saw her, and stared with all his might, far more than was civil. She reddened and

seemed slightly embarrassed, but it might have been only the effect of his staring so at her.

As soon as the dance was over Sir Frank got introduced to her ladyship, and when he had heard the sound of her voice he said in a low tone:—"Lady Goldsworth, you remind me very much of a young lady whom I once knew—a Miss Hathaway."

"Indeed!" answered Lady Goldsworth, carelessly toying with her fan.

"Your hair is not of the same colour as hers, and your expression is not quite the same."

"Then it seems that I am not like her?"

"Well, I was going to say you are so very much like her that I was about to ask whether your maiden name was Hathaway?"

"No; and I was never in England before my marriage," replied Lady Goldsworth, but in saying this she smiled so pleasantly at the Baronet that he did not feel snubbed.

Sir Frank was intimately persuaded that Lady Goldsworth and Kate Hathaway were one and the same person, but he was too much of a gentleman to go and spread his suspicions abroad. He even had the kindness to take her ladyship's part against Lord Nuffe, who also recognized Lady G. as an old flame of his, and was disposed to blurt out his opinions on this "doosed strange" thing in clubs and other places. But Sir Frank, who had known Kate Hathaway quite as well as Lord Nuffe, told the latter that he was mistaken;



THE HON. AGNES ROSA MATILDA VENEER POCKETING THE RED.

and added that, as Lady Goldsworth was a friend of his family, he must trouble Nuffe to keep a discreet tongue in his head when talking about her : which Nuffe, who knew his man, accordingly did.

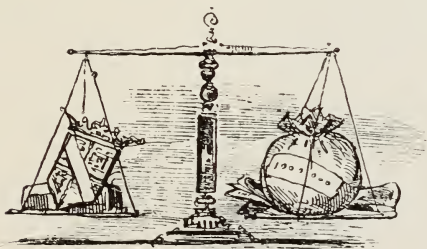
So Lady Goldsworth went on her way through London Society quite safely under Sir Frank's protection ; and there she shines to this day. And Sir Frank still protects her and is in all things her very obedient servant, and much liked by Sir Michael Goldsworth, who looks upon him as a nice funny fellow and mighty good company.

Mating with an Australian plutocrat did not prove equally advantageous to that fast aristocratic young beauty, the Honourable Agnes Rosa Matilda Veneer. The death of this young lady's father during her girlhood, set her free from paternal control ; and as soon as she came of age, she proceeded to kick over the maternal traces, and in conjunction with a sister of hers, led a gay life of unchaperoned freedom. They accompanied certain of their male friends to private boxes at Evans's, and indulged in midnight carousals after parties to the theatre with the "gilded youth" of the epoch, whom Agnes was partial to challenging to a trial of skill at pool or pyramids. While sojourning at Nice she frequented the gambling saloons at Monaco, and on one occasion is said to have driven home during the small hours of the morning, escorted by a party of inebriated Italians.

Circumstances rendering it necessary that the Hon. Agnes should be wedded and wedded soon, she made desperate efforts to hook one of her middle-aged admirers, a drunken, dissipated, and partially paralytic Australian millionaire, known in London Society by the expressive cognomen of "the Nugget." The antipodean plutocrat had purchased a fine estate which just then chanced to be in the market, and under the shade of his newly acquired ancestral trees, he proceeded to erect a huge castle, stocking it with antique furniture, family portraits, and heirlooms from Wardour Street. He spent, however, but little of his time there; the distractions of the metropolis having special charms for him. Among a certain section of Society he was noted for the splendid quality of his horse-flesh, and for the wild supper-parties he was in the habit of giving in his gorgeous suite of rooms at the Imperial Hotel—parties at which the charming Agnes was a frequent and welcome guest.

The Hon. Agnes having prudently provided herself with a special licence in order to take advantage of any outburst of maudlin affection her tipsy admirer might give way to, succeeded after one or two checks in accomplishing her purpose. An accommodating parson living close at hand was opportunely introduced one evening, when the Nugget, who had been previously well primed with champagne, was led like a lamb, or more properly speaking a goat, to the sacrifice. On a son and heir making his appearance several months

earlier than the astonished husband anticipated, differences arose between the pair, causing much scandal at the time and culminating in a judicial separation of the parties. This was followed by the revoking of the legacy of the great bulk of his fortune, which during halcyon honeymoon days the deeply smitten Australian had bequeathed to his newly made bride. This reprehensible proceeding on his part gave rise, on the Nugget's decease a short time afterwards, to a famous *cause célèbre* from which, in accordance with established usage, the lawyers and the mad doctors were the chief parties to profit.



VIII.

MIRABEL HILDACOURSE.

WHILE the struggle was still proceeding in the law courts over the will of the Australian millionaire, an Adventuress, whose matrimonial manœuvres in regard to another wealthy old gentleman had met with a less fortunate termination, was being driven in a police van to the House of Correction, under a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment. The career of Miss Mirabel Hildacourse, and its untoward collapse, had been for some weeks previous to this incident the talk of London.

People talked about it because it showed such stupefying audacity. That a woman should pass herself off under a false name and title, and make dupes on the faith of her supposed high connections, is a common occurrence enough; but that a widow, with a son twenty years old should give herself out to be a young lady of twenty-five, under the care of a guardian living as far off as the antipodes, and should play her assumed part with the utmost success, is a much rarer thing.

Mirabel Hildacourse was one of those women with

good figures and well-chiselled features, who by the help of cosmetics can preserve their beauty for a long time. She was clever and had fascinating manners. If it had been her luck to meet with an honest man in early life she would no doubt have made him happy, and everybody would have called her a charming woman ; but it was her ill-luck to marry a scamp, and the whole of her life was naturally affected thereby. The scamp deserted her, and some time afterwards died ; but in the interval between her desertion and widowhood Mirabel had to provide for herself and two young children, under circumstances so difficult to women without resources, who are neither wives nor widows.

She first of all went out as a governess, but her high spirit could not brook the restraint and contumely she was subjected to in this dependent position. She then set up a small school of her own, which failed lamentably. Being equally unsuccessful in other enterprises the upshot was that she was constrained to pull the devil by the tail in various ways till at length she heard of her husband's death, and then the idea occurred to her of trying to re-marry profitably.

As she contemplated accomplishing this object in the capacity of a spinster, it was necessary that she should separate herself for a time from her children. Like a dutiful mother, however, she took care to provide for their board, education and clothing while they continued apart by placing them for limited



periods at one boarding school after another, where their wardrobes might be renewed whenever necessary by confiding tradesmen of the town, who, together with the proprietors of the educational establishments in question, were invariably left to whistle for their money. To provide for her own subsistence and main-

tain such a position was as essential to the success of her scheme, Miss Mirabel Hildacourse, as she had now become, had recourse to practices which, in plain language, can only be characterized as swindling.

When matters were at a very low ebb with our heroine, chance threw her in the way of a philanthropic doctor who was forming a corps of ambulance nurses for service in the East during the Russo-Turkish war. An avocation of this character exercises a strong hold over the imaginations of women of the adventurous class, and Mirabel begged that she might be enrolled a member of the corps. On her services being accepted she succeeded by some ingenious means in raising sufficient money to get conveyed to the seat of war, where she behaved exceedingly well as a hospital nurse. Among patients and doctors there was but one opinion as to her courage and gentleness, her untiring watchfulness and steadfast devotion. The result of all this was that Miss Hildacourse made many friends, and eventually returned to England with many letters of introduction to persons of good position, dignitaries of the Church, and individuals of influence generally.

Among the latter was an elderly physician of property, who took a fancy to Mirabel as soon as he saw her. She had called upon him ostensibly to ask his assistance in procuring a situation as matron in a hospital, but he at once told her that such a position was not suited to a lady of her educated tastes and

evident abilities, and he invited her to remain as a guest in his house until he could find her some better occupation.



Doubtless the old gentleman was smitten at first sight with the juvenile ways of the middle-aged widow, in which case what wonder if she should have conceived the project of marrying the amiable septuagenarian. Mirabel Hildacourse settled herself in his house as house-keeper, companion, and reader. She was certainly very good and useful to him ; she kept his home in perfect order, and transacted all his business affairs for him. His servants liked her, and to all appearances she was as devoted and attentive as the most affectionate daughter could have been—so much so, indeed, that the poor old man began to miss her if she were away



MIRABEL HILDACOURSE IN THE HOME OF THE OLD PHYSICIAN.

from his sight for a single hour. The day came when Mirabel saw that her hold on the somewhat weak-minded old gentleman was sufficiently strong to justify her in urging him to marry her, and he unquestionably would have acceded to her wishes in this respect had not his grown-up children—for he was a widower—seeing the turn that matters were taking, suddenly stepped forward and denounced her to him as an Adventuress.

These sons and daughters of the old physician had at first received Miss Hildacourse with favour. They liked their father to have a companion, and they liked Miss Hildacourse well enough, so long as she occupied no more intimate position in the family; but when it became a question of seeing this *soi-disant* young lady set over them as a mother-in-law, with the prospect, too, of her securing the lion's share of their anticipated inheritance, their sentiments towards her naturally changed. The doctor's son happened to meet with somebody who thought he recognized "Miss" Hildacourse as a married woman, who had formerly passed under another name. He pushed his inquiries, and unearthed a young gentleman, who was said to be Miss Hildacourse's son, but whom she declared to be her brother.

These facts being communicated to the old doctor, who was moreover terrified by hints that attempts were being made to poison him, filled him with dire dismay, though they need scarcely have done so. Like

other old fools similarly circumstanced, he had grown dotingly fond of Mirabel Hildacourse, and common sense should have told him that the woman had every inducement to continue faithful and attentive to him during the remaining years he had to live. There was no need for him to feel that he had had great good luck in escaping from the hands of an Adventuress, who might perhaps have poisoned him. Mirabel Hildacourse, glad to have secured so pleasant a home for herself, rather than have shortened the life of her benefactor, would most likely have tried to prolong it, and have moreover sought to render his existence extremely comfortable. It is certain, however, that she would have inherited a good share of the old gentleman's property at his death, and this is what his sons and daughters, no doubt, wanted to prevent.

They drove out the wretched Adventuress with ignominy from the house, and at the same time brought to ruin the character she had lately won for herself. She was not really a bad woman—she had sinned more from necessity than inclination—but they made it appear as if she were something particularly despicable, so that in a wild, despairing mood, the poor woman, seeing all her plans and hopes shattered, was moved to prosecute them for libel. It was a foolish proceeding, for when she had lost her suit she of course laid herself open to a charge of perjury. The whole of her past life had been brought out in open court; that she had told fib upon fib was manifest

enough without the overwhelming arguments of counsel, and the "hanging" judge, who pronounced



sentence upon her, hinted that she might consider herself lucky in getting off with twelve months imprisonment.

And no doubt she was, seeing how English justice apportioned sentences as a rule. A husband who beats his wife black and blue, and ends by kicking out all her front teeth, gets six months' imprisonment as a *maximum*. Mirabel Hildacourse, for trying to better her position by an untruth, or rather a series of untruths, as to her age and other matters—which, however, really injured no one—was bid to congratulate herself on getting twelve months as a minimum. She had certainly told many lies, but all these flowed naturally from the first lie which she had been guilty of.

Having given a romancing account of herself, she was of course bound to support her first untruth by a number of collateral fibs, so that the counts for perjury against her seemed innumerable, whereas they were all practically included in one—just as the various chapters of a novel go to make up a single story.

Emile Augier, in his *Aventurière*, has produced a heroine very much like Mirabel Hildacourse, and the type is necessarily a common one, for what becomes of all those women who lead so called “gay” lives, and who are to be met with of an evening on the “Rogues’ Walk,” or at the Aquarium? Some of them go from bad to worse, and end their careers in wanton infamy; but others are saved by some lucky chance from rolling completely downhill; and how is it possible for these to make a new start in honesty without dissembling more or less about their past lives? They are obliged to swear, and to swear very hard, to a number of untrue things if they are to live in any peace; and some sympathy must inevitably attach to them, if at the moment when they seem to have discarded the past utterly, it suddenly rises up in judgment against them and overwhelms them.

IX.

LILY GORR.

It is not often that a "gay" lady, known generally to have belonged to the class so styled, succeeds in making her way to a respectable position, where she is esteemed not only by men but by her own sex. Yet the thing happens sometimes. Lily Gorr was an edifying example of what talent and cool impudence will do towards helping a "soiled dove" on its onward flight.

Some years ago there was a fat old woman called Kate Hamilton, who kept a night drinking house in the purlieus of the Gaymarket, and a boarding-house at Evangel Grove. The boarders were young ladies who had latch-keys of their own, and kept early hours, coming home mostly at 2 or 3 a.m. Lily Gorr was one of Kate Hamilton's lodgers, and perhaps the prettiest of them. She had a soft baby face with large dark eyes, very deep and earnest: yet she was no baby at all, far from it. None knew better than she the value of a £5 note, or the taste of dry champagne. She had as much worldly wisdom in her head as three old men. While lolling in an easy chair and allowing herself to be talked to while she puffed the



clouds of her cigarette ceilingwards, she was carefully on her guard against being fooled. She had no heart at all. Everything in her was to be bought—her good temper was purchaseable at so much, her company to dinner, or to any other form of entertainment at so much more. By these means she made a good deal of money.

One day this pretty little thing, who had many feline graces—and was just about as gentle as a kitten with mice—suddenly made her appearance on a London stage as a tragedy actress. What is more, she did

very well. She had become acquainted with some poor wretch of a man of letters, who had taken her in hand as Mr. Bowes did Miss Cortigan, whom he converted into the Fotheringay. The difference was, however, that Lily Gorr really had talent ; so that all the lessons bestowed upon her were invested at good interest. There was no need to teach her how to fold her hands across her bosom and smile while curtsying to the public. She did all that kind of thing very well of her own inspiration ; quite an artless, childish thing was she to look at—most modest in her deportment, soft in speech, graceful in gesture—just the girl to play Juliet and look the part to perfection.

She had no native shyness to overcome, and that was a great help to her. Shy ?—bless your heart, the hussey would have stared a regiment of dragoons out of countenance—horses, bandsmen, regimental doctor and all : though perhaps the regimental doctor would have made her more nervous than anybody else. After a little practice on the stage her talent came out in full bloom ; she achieved great success, took the town by storm, and became rated as a first-class actress.

But her morals did not improve much. She married by way of making her private life seem respectable, and chose an unbeneficed clergyman for her partner. This reverend gentleman had a droll time of it. Lily's temper was strongly charged with electricity and her language when she was angry was enough to make the housemaids stop their ears. Her

husband learned a good deal of swearing from her, and tried now and then to make use of it in silencing her ; but when speech failed she took to her claws, and at this game he was no match for her.

It was a bad feature in Lily Gorr's character that in her calm moments she was an insufferably conceited little minx. No conversation had any charm for her unless it turned on her beauty. She talked of herself coolly as the prettiest woman in London, and had such a high opinion of her own acting that she was jealous of all other actresses, and would not hear any one of them praised in her hearing. She took care to keep all the prominent critics in her favour by granting them whatever return they chose to ask for, and her husband had to bear this as he could. He bore it for a few years with the meekness of Moses or of Menelaus ; but at last died in the prime of life to his no small relief. He seems to have become an infidel in his latter days, solely because the idea of there being another world in which he might meet his wife again, was something too dreadful for him to believe in.

Lily's marriage had given her the respectable domestic position she wanted, and had enabled ladies of a certain sort to invite her to their houses. There are ladies who have such a natural affinity with everything that is improper that they only beg impropriety to put on the flimsiest veil in order that they may take it to their arms. Everybody knew pretty well who Lily Gorr had been, and that she was utterly and

scandalously unfit to enter any decent drawing-room ; but many ladies chose to shut their eyes to this and claimed to be good philanthropists for taking her up. The truth is there was something piquant to them in the society of the clever and faulty Rahab, who could tell them so much about the private goings on of their husbands, brothers and uncles.

Lily grew rich ; she went starrng in America ; she bought a fine house ; she invested money in good securities ; and she often went on short trips to Paris for her amusement, escorted now by one man, now by another, for she was electric and hated loneliness. It was in Paris that she met with her death. A glass of iced milk, taken in the Bois de Boulogne in sultry weather and on the top of some spirits imbibed in the morning, brought on some stomach cramps, which a foolish doctor treated as for dropsy, and so disposed of the pretty dramatic flower while she was still in her full bloom.

After her death it was found that Lily Gorr had amassed a good deal of money, and had bequeathed by far the greater part of it to a gallant General (belonging to a millionaire family) who had once been her protector. She also left some legacies in favour of theatrical critics who had been good to her, and to whom in return she had been good enough too. One of the fraternity, who had written her up in fine style on various occasions, was, however, forgotten in the will ; and naturally conceiving that his disinterested

praise deserved some better return, he appears to have expressed his lamentations in the hearing of third parties. Hence arose certain ferocious strictures in the columns of the *Bottle Holder*, a radical Sunday sporting paper, followed by a rather noisy law-suit in which the gallant General, coming forward to save the honour of the assailed critic, could not escape giving evidence touching his own by no means reputable relations with the Lily deceased.

A soiled lily she was at the best, socially speaking. As an actress she deserved all the praise she received, and there would be no occasion for recalling her little history here had she confined herself to the stage. But the impudent success with which she forced her way into the outskirts of Society, and won something like a character for sweetness and repentant purity—she, the most vixenish and irredeemable of hardened sinners!—may fairly be said to earn her a place in any gallery of Adventuresses.



X.

BELLA MARTINGALE.



ALL female Adventurers are not cast in the same mould. Bella Martingale was what the French call *une bonne fille*, a term not exactly

translatable by the words "good girl:" yet she was a good girl too, though she did not look it. On a casual

acquaintance, anybody would be apt to have taken her for a maiden of the same persuasion in ethics as Lily Gorr. She was the daughter of Martingale the horse-dealer. All London knew her, and she was known in the shires too. Every day in the Park she could be seen driving a superb pair of ponies, or ambling along the Row on a beautiful hack. No woman could ride or drive as she did. Her ponies went spinning along at a pace which no other human creature could have got out of them without whipping, and every hack she rode became gentle as a sheep before she had been long in its saddle.

The women scrutinized Bella, and men touched



their hats to her as she careered about ; but she got more nods than formal salutations, and a good many winks with the nods. Sometimes she drew up her pony-chaise under the trees, and held an open-air court. A dapper groom, faultless as to hat and tops, stood at the ponies' heads, while a dozen gentlemen of undeniable rank and fortune grouped themselves around, admired her turn-out, and talked about horses with her. The talk seldom dwelt long on other subjects, for Bella was known to be on the look out for a husband, and men were rather shy of venturing on sweet topics with her.

Bella was a pretty girl, and altogether fascinating, and any one of her many admirers would have been



delighted to set her up in a villa in Evangel Grove without any tedious preliminaries in the way of marriage. But Bella was not going to ruin herself

in that way. Old Martingale, her father, knew that he could trust her, and sent her out without any fear, accompanied only by that knowing imp, Jack her groom. During the hunting season she used to go down alone to Melton—that is, alone with her maid and Jack—and stay at the house of a well-to-do married farmer, her father's friend. All this was strictly proper, and, indeed, Bella was so well fenced in proprieties, that not a man could boast of ever having spoken a word to her in private excepting in the open air.



Her exploits in the hunting-field were enough to make some men, reputed brave, writhe in their saddles.



BELLA MARTINGALE.

It made one thrill to see her ride at a stiff hedge and ditch, which looked as if no horse could clear it. What a seat she had! With her pretty cheeks slightly flushed from the excitement of the gallop; her lips quietly, but not tightly, set; and her whole face wearing a perfectly collected expression, she cleared the stiffest obstacles without fear, and laughed in a pleasing, girlish way when congratulated or remonstrated with on her daring.

Aristocratic sportswomen viewed Bella without any gratification, and took care to keep her sternly at a distance; but inwardly they pondered over the exquisite cut of her habit, the nice look of her well-blocked hat, and the strange, wondrous grace of her entire appearance. They were envious of her, and it made them the more angry that scandal had not a word to say against her.

Poor Bella, she had her run of ill-luck at last. She married Dick Spinney, Lord Copswood's nephew and heir. The prospect of the coronet dazzled her and blinded her to Dick's fondness for the bottle. Somebody warned her that she was going to make a bad purchase, but she had faith in herself, and thought she could manage Dick. Perhaps she was a little fond of him, for he had been known once as handsome Dick, and the weakness of his character was more calculated to attract than to repel a girl of nerve like hers.

Bella certainly did her best for the sorry good-for-nothing, and would have saved him if anything could

have done it. She made the most admirable, patient, and judicious of wives ; and not a word ever escaped from her to show that she repented of her choice and despised her husband. Often she had to sit up for him late at night, having sent her servants to bed ; and when he reeled home soaked with brandy and dropped senseless on the door-mat, she carried him upstairs to bed in her strong lithe arms just as if he were a baby.

The poor wretch had fits of maudlin penitence at times and shed tears, but this never lasted long ; he always broke out again, and ended by dying of *D.T.* in his own house, for Bella would not have him taken to an asylum. He died before he could inherit his uncle's title, and he left his young wife with a couple of epileptic children.

Poor Bella : she deserved better ; and it is sad to see her nowadays, with her pale face and dulled eyes, watching over the two children of a drunken, imbecile father,—children who, she knows, no care of hers will prevent from becoming lunatics. She bought the chance of a coronet rather dear—with her life's happiness !

XI.

PIOUS MRS. PALMHOLD.

“HAVE you heard Moody and Sankey? Have you heard Mrs. Palmhold?”

Mrs. Palmhold had no connection with Moody and Sankey, but the above question was often asked in the same breath. Mrs. Palmhold was as Moody and Sankey rolled into one and made female. She sang, she preached, and she played the American organ. She could, alone and unsupported, take all the parts in a religious entertainment and keep the attention of the congregation from flagging a single instant. There was always a crush at the doors to obtain admittance, and, when the collection plates went round, gold and silver were showered in freely.

Who was Mrs. Palmhold? The first time she appeared on a religious stage under the auspices of some highly respectable lay churchmen who had organized special Sunday services for the people, she declared herself in a beautifully toned voice to be “a reclaimed sinner.” She was a handsome, attractive woman, with a creamy complexion, auburn hair and lustrous eyes, which had a soft, kindly expression.

Her smile was most winning, and she smiled often while she preached, for she inculcated the doctrine of universal brotherly love, and there is nothing to make one frown in that.

Her appearance was rendered additionally effective by the fine clothes she wore. She dressed in black,



but in the very height of fashion : her pretty bonnets, loaded with jet and black lace, cost ten guineas, and her twelve-button black gloves cased her small hands

—size, small fives—without a crease. Her dresses fitted close to her figure and displayed its symmetrical proportions to the greatest advantage, and when she moved from her preaching desk to her organ, and slightly lifted her skirt, her dumb-stricken audience beheld with pious wonder and satisfaction the tiniest of feet in the most unmatched of boots. All this was well enough ; but who was Mrs. Palmhold ?

A woman who had been a great sinner ! She said this so often, and with such sweet earnestness, that it would have been discourtesy to doubt her word. One was free to conclude that at some time or other, and in some place or other, there had been a Mr. Palmhold, who had not found his life a very pleasant one ; but she vouchsafed no details as to her manner of misbehaving towards this unfortunate man : nor did she express any public hope that he would forgive her. She asked her congregation to forgive her ; and this they freely did twice every Sunday in great crowds, and sometimes on week-days as well.

Mrs. Palmhold's Special Salvation Services were advertised in the papers. The notices did not state that there would be preaching and music, admission one shilling ; the admission was free, but when Mrs. Palmhold had got her audience well under the spell of her fascinating eye, when she had talked to them about their sins till their eyes were moist, and played to them till they all roared in chorus that they wanted to be off to Jordan, then she told them that it

would please her if they gave of their superfluity to relieve the necessities of other sinners whom she had taken under her special protection.

To please her the enthusiastic congregations who attended her special services would have done anything. When Mrs. Palmhold invited the callous, the hardened, the infidels, to come to her to tread the road which she had walked, to place their hands in her sisterly hand, many of her male hearers thought that they should very much like to cross with her that road along which she had travelled and which she called the Wilderness of Sin. Some of them too would have been happy to sojourn with her, for a long time, in that fascinating naughty wilderness.

She must have made a great deal of money, for, in addition to the regular offertories, she received large contributions towards divers charitable works which she had undertaken. She was purposing to found a Refuge for Castaways, and a Training College for preachers of the fair sex, so soon as she should have collected £20,000. An architect had prepared designs of these two institutions, and they hung framed and glazed in the lobby of her Mission Hall with money boxes under them.

That the objects Mrs. Palmhold had in view were most excellent and lofty none could doubt; for how doubt a woman who so strenuously repeated that she had been a terribly wicked sinner? The candour of this avowal disarmed all criticism, for if anybody had



MRS. PALMHOLD.

started up to say that at one period of her life Mrs. Palmhold had been a very naughty person, thousands would have answered that this was no news, for that Mrs. Palmhold acknowledged the fact with touching good faith every Sunday at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

She had most telling ways of impressing upon her "dear friends," as she called her congregation, that she wished them to believe unreservedly in what she said about her past life. She would break off in the midst of playing and singing to say quietly: "Formerly, when I was so wicked, this next verse always moved me strangely," and she would sing that verse in a subdued tone, with a slight tremulous quaver on the last notes, and tears in her eyes that gazed heavenwards. If the people had been in a theatre they would have applauded: as it was they snivelled.

Mrs. Palmhold once fell ill, and her special services had to be suspended for a fortnight. When she reappeared, she prefaced her sermon by expressing her "deep thanks to all kind friends for the many marks of sympathy and love" she had received during her trial. The truth is that her knocker and bell had been going constantly, as servants and messengers came to her door bringing cases of wine, hampers of game, baskets of fruit, butter, cream, eggs, and envelopes containing cheques to pay her doctor's bills. All these tokens of affection the pretty preacher summed up in appropriate words, by saying that her illness had been a "blessed time" to her.

Mrs. Palmhold received many offers of marriage. Two or three wealthy middle-aged gentlemen flung themselves at her feet, exclaiming that they could never be saved unless she would take their salvation into her own hands. She rebuked their desponding sentiments, and stroked the heated brows of her



admirers with her soft, cool hands, telling them to be good and self-denying, and to look upon her only as a dear sister. They sobbed awfully at being thus spoken to, and pressed heavy cheques upon her for her Refuge and College, hoping perhaps that they might thereby touch her heart.

But Mrs. Palmhold did not marry. After a long and successful round of services in London she went through the provinces ; then she embarked for America, and it was understood that she had confided all her business arrangements to an *impresario* who paid her travelling expenses, allowed her two hundred guineas a week (for the unbuilt Refuge and College of course), and kept the surplus of the offertories for himself. After a protracted and most lucrative tour through the States, Mrs. Palmhold returned to Europe ; but the doctors forbade her to preach again, saying that her lungs were affected, and ordered her to reside in a warm climate.

Upon this our interesting sinner disappeared, and it was not known exactly what warm climate she had chosen : but one of her quondam admirers met her rather unexpectedly some months ago in the lobby of the Grand Opera in Paris. She was waiting for her carriage, and was leaning on the arm of a handsome young man with light curly hair—probably a “ dear brother.” And she cut the other “ dear brother ”—her quondam admirer—dead.

XII.

MRS. DE COY.

WHAT becomes of divorced women ? When the last act of the conjugal drama is played out ; when Sir J. Hannen has pronounced his decree *nisi* with costs against the co-respondent, how fares it with the respondent who is deprived of husband, children, home, and dame all at a stroke ?

Mrs. De Coy, the heroine of a divorce case that made a great stir a few years ago, was so unlucky as to have a co-respondent who was not rich enough to marry her. The costs in the case aforesaid ruined him. Mrs. De Coy was of good family, but her family were not particularly pleased with her for having brought herself under Sir J. Hannen's notice, and the only terms on which they would consent to help her were, that she should live abroad. They agreed to allow her £200 a year, but this allowance was to cease if ever she set foot again in England. Mrs. De Coy's allowance would in the days when she lived with her husband have been scarcely enough to pay her glover's yearly bill ; and as she was still in the prime of youth at the time of her divorce, she resolved not to worry herself

by any attempt to live within it. She had plenty of male friends, relics of her former visiting-list, and with the kind assistance of these she was soon leading a merry life in Paris. She had apartments in the



Champs Elysées ; she drove to the Bois in a grand barouche, and she went a good deal into official society. French official society is not exclusive, and Frenchmen certainly find it difficult to understand the exact status of an English divorced woman. They believe

that the English are peculiar in their ways, and that they can get their marriage ties dissolved easily.

The "*jolie* Madame De Coy," who seemed to have plenty of money, and who gave such nice little dinner parties, where one met distinguished politicians, artists, journalists, English peers and Russian princesses, did not look at all like a *déclassée*. She differed from Frenchwomen judicially separated from their husbands in that she was free to marry again—which was a great point—and it is highly probable that she would have remarried had her friends continued generous. But she was a little woman of very extravagant turn who spent money without counting; and she was deficient in the arts by which professional *anonymas* of the better sort keep their purses well-filled. Being a lady by birth, education and manners, she kept her acquaintances under a feeling of rather awkward restraint. She claimed the respect due to the old position which she had forfeited; and sometimes showed herself a little too touchy and prim in her efforts to appear respectable. The consequence was that men grew weary of her and left her.

Then she began her apprenticeship as a *demi-mondaine* in grim earnest. She was continually in debt and in pecuniary straits. Her furniture and jewels were seized; she had to fly from Paris to escape the imprisonment to which aliens are subject when they run up bills they cannot pay. She betook herself to one watering-place after another, remain-

ing just long enough in each to make the place too hot to hold her. She wrote begging-letters for £10 notes to the men who had formerly given her hundreds; she dunned all her friends and her husband's friends: so shameless did she grow under the pinch of poverty, that she ended by writing to her husband, saying she was dying of consumption in a hospital, and begged him for pity's sake to send her a few pounds that she might be decently buried.

The unhappy man who had once deeply loved her was so much moved by this epistle, that he forgot all his resentment, and hastened off to Fécamp, whence the letter had been dated. He found his wife not in the hospital, but in shabby lodgings lurching off Burgundy and *paté de foie gras*. She was dressed in a soiled *peignoir*, with her hair falling over her shoulders, and there was a greasy pack of cards on the table, with which she had been telling her own fortune. On the hearthrug sprawled a baby two years old.

Mrs. De Coy had not expected her husband, and the sight of him gave her a turn. She rose very pale, and was half inclined to run away; but he stopped her with a wave of the hand. He was so overcome—so shocked and sorrowful, that for some minutes he could not speak; but at last he pointed to the baby, who had scrambled to its feet and was staring at him with a finger in her mouth.

“Yes, that's mine,” she said, hoarsely.

“And the father—who is he? where is he?”



Mrs. De Coy shrugged her shoulders.

“Oh, my poor Lizzie, that you should have come to this state,” moaned the wretched husband. He uttered no other reproach beyond this ; but asked her how much money would be required to set her quite

straight ; and by-and-bye he induced her to make out a list of all the debts she had incurred since their parting. He promised to pay everything, and double her allowance, so that she might have the means of living in decent comfort ; and he offered to adopt her child. She burst into tears then : up to that moment she had kept mastery over her feelings, and tried to show a hard sullenness, but all that was left of good in her leapt into an expiring flame at the mention of her child. She had other children—those of her husband, whom she was never to see again, and the thought that this poor little waif would lead a life very different to theirs, if not rescued in time, suddenly wrung her heart. She would have loved to keep the child ; but for the child's own sake, she sobbed out :—
“ Yes, take her.”

“ My poor Lizzie, try and do better,” faltered the husband presently as he was going away ; “ you can't be happy, living as you are.”

“ Happy ! no,” she answered bitterly. Nevertheless, on the day after her husband had gone away with her child, she was humming contentedly enough before her looking-glass as she dressed her hair. Her debts were to be paid ; her allowance was doubled, so she had cause enough to sing. Women of Mrs. De Coy's description, necessarily get hardened. Emotion may seize upon them sometimes, but if they yielded too often to that kind of thing it would kill them. On the whole, Mrs. De Coy said to herself, that the

doleful letter which she had written to her husband to announce her approaching death had produced capital results.

She spent the ensuing winter at Nice, whence she paid frequent visits to the gambling saloons of Monte Carlo, in company with one of her male admirers—a bald-pated Hebrew banker, whose acquaintance



she had made at Dieppe. In the spring she returned to Paris but could not resume her former position there, for it had got bruited abroad that her antecedents were disreputable. She had not been careful to keep up appearances in the days when she wandered about among sea-coast towns, and some stories concerning her embarrassments and the ways of getting out of them had been so exaggerated as to wear an ugly look. However, having now a clean slate so far as duns were concerned, she obtained fresh credit on the strength of her bills having been paid—long after her creditors had struck them off their books as bad debts—and she commenced quite a new sort of life among new friends.

She gave brilliant parties almost every evening of the week, and they were attended by Princesses and Countesses in great numbers ; but all these ladies were tarred with the same brush as herself. They were “irregulars” separated from their husbands—the aristocracy of the “half-world”, the leaders of the grand army of Adventuresses. They were fascinating enough to attract at first some of the best male society of the capital ; but one evening there was an awkward affair caused by a “Greek” slipping into the rooms and cheating an ambassador at cards, after which the company distinctly deteriorated in quality.

Madame De Coy’s saloons then became a regular private hell to which “Greeks” allured very young men, and inexperienced foreigners, chiefly South

American plutocrats, Russians and Turks. Swindling was carried on there as a nightly business upon which the hostess received an ample commission. She might have got rich now had she been able to curb her extravagant propensities ; but before she had seriously set herself to lay by for a rainy day, a destructive storm burst upon her unexpectedly. One night the police made a raid into her rooms, seized all the money on the card-tables, and conveyed her to the Préfecture along with several "Greeks" and Countesses her accomplices. She was locked up in a cell and remained there for several days : then she was removed to the prison of St. Lazare under remand from a Juge d'Instruction, who announced his intention of committing her for trial on a charge of swindling.

Once again her husband had to interfere to save her ; but this time he could only do so by getting her declared insane. The French lunacy laws are very lax, and doctors will always be found to certify that a "*grande dame*" who misconducts herself must be mad. So Mrs. De Coy was removed to a private asylum, and there she is still, to her great disgust, for a long incarceration was more than she had bargained for.

After her arrest she had telegraphed to her ex-husband in the wildest terms imploring him to save her ; but she had calculated that she would not be made to spend more than a few weeks or months in an asylum. Mr. De Coy, however, acting upon advice

both legal and medical, resolved that she should no longer drag his name in the mud ; and so, although he had strictly speaking no hold over her, he made use of the power which a long purse gives to get Mrs. De Coy put into the charge of a mad doctor who was not likely to let her go so long as a high price for her maintenance was regularly paid. Mrs. De Coy enjoys every material comfort in her seclusion ; but she will probably not recover her liberty until she is quite an old woman, even if she gets it then.



XIII.

MRS. LAWKINS.

MRS. DE COY was an Adventuress both lucky and unlucky in having friends to assist her, save her from prison, and shut her up ; Mrs. Lawkins is the type of an Adventuress of whom many specimens are to be found in semi-genteel localities, whence they often proceed to penitentiaries. She was a woman of the same calibre as our friend the Countess d'Orenbarre, but operating in a lower social circle.

Mrs. Lawkins, fat, grey-haired, and fifty, took lodgings in a genteel street in Bloomsbury, at two guineas a week ; and entered into possession with luggage enough to win the respect of her landlord and landlady. She had the drawing-room floor, and during six weeks paid her rent with commendable regularity every Monday. She paid likewise for the things she ate and drank, and gave no cause whatever for reproach. Altogether she paid about £20 in the course of those six weeks.

But for these £20 she contrived in a year to get about £400 from her landlord—which was not a bad return for her investment. The landlord was a Mr.

Flatte, a gentleman who had business in the City and was never seen at home between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., except on Sundays and bank-holidays. He and his wife had not long been married, and they were a nice young couple, with all their troubles before them, all their experience to buy, and one baby already to provide for. The story which Mrs. Lawkins told to Mr. and Mrs. Flatte interested them vastly. She had inherited a large legacy from a relative in Australia. She showed them a long letter from a colonial lawyer, setting forth the terms of her relative's will, giving full details of the property bequeathed to her, and asking for instructions with reference to the realization of the estate. An active correspondence seemed to be going on between Mrs. Lawkins and the solicitor at the Antipodes; but the good lady complained that she was put to great expense for searches of certificates of births, marriages and deaths, necessary to be filed in the colonial courts. In a private conversation with Mrs. Flatte, she confidentially confessed that her income being small, these unexpected calls, however gratifying in one sense, were becoming a serious drag upon her, and that she thought of giving up her apartments and going to live at an economical boarding-house until the business was settled and some remittances which she had already written for reached her from Australia.

Poor Mrs. Flatte was in a state of great consternation at this intelligence. The drawing-room floor,

which had long been vacant, now nearly paid the rent of the house ; and Mrs. Flatte urged upon her husband the policy of keeping their lodger with them as long as they possibly could.

Mr. Flatte thereupon good naturedly told Mrs. Lawkins that she need not trouble herself to pay for



her rooms and board until it was quite convenient to do so. He could very well afford to wait, he said ; and meanwhile, if he could oblige her with a few pounds on loan he should be very happy to let her have them. The upshot of this was that for weeks and weeks Mrs. Lawkins lived at free quarters in the Flattes' house, and on one pretence and another borrowed several ten pound notes from the confiding couple.

In truth these inexperienced young people were really very glad to let Mrs. Lawkins have the money, for they were persuaded that she was about to become very rich : and besides, she had more than once hinted that she would repay a hundredfold any kindnesses shown her now. She talked of lending Mr. Flatte a large sum of money to enable him to set up as a merchant on his own account. She had faith in his abilities, and was persuaded that money placed in his hands would be more prudently and profitably employed than if it were invested in any of those swindling joint-stock companies which are continually coming to smash. She would be his sleeping partner, she said, and if he succeeded he would owe her no thanks, for the gain would be all on her side.

These generous sayings pleased simple Mr. Flatte, who became more and more free with his £10 notes, and at length advanced £250 (every penny of his savings) all in a lump to enable Mrs. Lawkins to pay a certain portion of the legacy duty which owing, as she explained, to an unaccountable mistake of the Austra-

lian lawyers, was payable in London. As security for this advance, however, Mrs. Lawkins lodged in Mr. Flatte's hands a bill of exchange for £5000 at ninety days, which had been sent out to her from Australia as a first small instalment of the money coming to her. Mr. Flatte was requested kindly to present the bill when it became due, as Mrs. Lawkins did not know "how those things were managed." He promised to do what was required, and locked up the bill in his desk. Some few days afterwards, Mrs. Lawkins showed the Flattes a letter of invitation, from, as she said, some distant relative asking her to spend a few days in the country, and announced that she would not be back for a week, or perhaps a little longer.

She never returned at all, however, and the poor Flattes were not long in finding out that they had been hoaxed. It transpired that Mrs. Lawkins had for some time past been quietly removing her most valuable portable property from the house, and had replaced it with some worthless weighty articles which had made the boxes she left behind feel uncommonly heavy. The revelation of so much cunning and fraud quite prostrated the Flattes, who had no resource but to lodge a complaint with the police. Unhappily they could bring no serious charge against their ex-lodger, for the sham bill of exchange, which might have afforded ground for a charge of forgery, was found to be missing from Mr. Flatte's desk. The nimble Mrs. Lawkins must have somehow abstracted

it with a prudent eye to future possibilities ; so Mr. Flatte had to content himself with preferring a charge of obtaining money under false pretences, and a warrant was issued to apprehend Mrs. Lawkins wherever she might be found.

She was not found for a long time, but about two years after she had absconded from the Flattes' she was arrested elsewhere on a similar charge, and poor Mr. Flatte reading of her case in the papers then came forward with his own accusation against her. Mrs. Lawkins was tried at the Old Bailey, but the judge



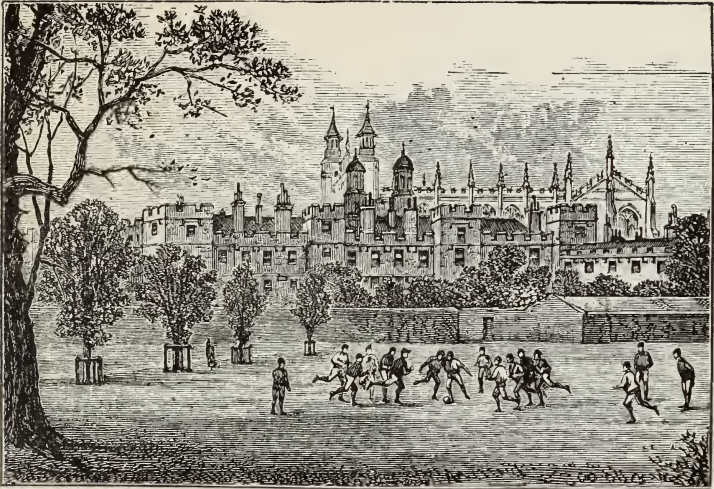
showed himself rather favourable towards her. He made some uncomplimentary remarks on the Flattes, saying that there was a category of persons who seemed to carry their money in their open hands as



a standing temptation to the needy. Noticing the bias of his lordship's mind, Mrs. Lawkins's counsel advised her to plead guilty to the several charges, and throw herself on the mercy of the Court—which she did with a perfectly unmoved countenance, and was duly sentenced to a year's imprisonment—not much considering that this wiped out all her old scores against Society, and put her in the comfortable position of being able to move about in perfect security so soon as her term should have expired. Mr. Flatte had to walk out of court with his head bowed down in sorrow, having met with no sympathy from anybody, not even from his own solicitor, who repeatedly asked him how he could have been so utterly foolish?

Yet his was a foolishness that came as much from a good heart as from a simple head; and it speaks pretty well for human nature that foolishness such as his should be so common.

PUBLIC SCHOOL BOYS AND
UNDERGRADUATES.



ETON COLLEGE.

I.

ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS—DRAWBACKS OF ETON.

SINCE the Boy is father to the Man, his education is ever a matter of vital interest to the community. It is more so in the British Isles than elsewhere, for ours is a country of large families, of primogeniture, and of competitive examinations. On the use which an English boy makes of his time at school and college depends much of his chance of success in after life. There is no country where so much importance is attached to a good university degree, to prizes for Latin and Greek, and there is none where so many careers are open to mere proficiency in early studies. At twenty a well-crammed youth has before him a

multitude of professions, all affording an immediate competency, and prospects at once lucrative and honourable. He has the Church, with its countless benefices, tutorships, and schoolmasterships; the Civil Service, at home and in India; and the Army, which may be made a paying profession to those who work in it. Even the Bar has ceased to be quite a close corporation, and it offers innumerable resources to the studious, whether a man choose to plod patiently in it, with a view to a good practice and a judgeship in England, or to accept one of the many judicial offices obtainable in the colonies.

As a land abounding in younger sons, who have only their wits to rely on, England has established a social equality which is a much more solid thing than the political equality of Frenchmen—namely, the equality before Examiners. Every boy who aspires to climb high by means of books can do so, and he gets his first chance when he is barely out of the nursery—at ten years of age—when he can win a foundation scholarship, which secures him a first-class education for a very small yearly sum.

Consequently British public schools are closely watched by parents, and they are, taking them all in all, the best in the world. Foreigners are as unanimous about that as Englishmen themselves. If it were only for the great fact that English schools have succeeded in making a boy's life pleasant, instead of the fearful drudgery it once was, they would still

carry the palm from foreign educational establishments, where it remains a maxim that lads must be confined, bored, overtasked, and ill-fed. Amongst English schools, however, there are good, better, and best; and even the best leave something to be desired. An educational system which works upon the plan of allowing boys as much liberty as possible, is naturally liable to beget abuses, and it may be complained that in some of our most famous public schools these abuses have not been reduced to a minimum.

The finest of English schools is Eton. It is the most agreeable to boys, the most costly for parents, the richest in endowments, the most aristocratic, and the most ill-conducted of any. Why Eton should be so ill-conducted is perhaps due less to any defect in its organization than to the fact that it has not, within living memory, possessed a Head Master who was actuated by any zeal for improvements, or by any great sense of his responsibilities in training boys to be intelligent, upright, and useful men. Doctors Keate, Goodal, Hawtrey, Goodford, and Balstow have all been scholars and gentlemen, who looked rather to maintaining things as they found them than to introducing changes which should raise the tone of the school and galvanize their boys into a sturdiness of purpose in all things, whether sports or lessons.

Etonians themselves, they were imbued with the idea that Eton was a school apart, which had no need to take examples from outside—which must not,

indeed, condescend to take them—and, mixing largely with lords, squires, rich merchants, and bishops, who asked little more than that their sons should be taught a smattering of the classics and be kept out of mischief, they confined their functions strictly within these limits. They were, in fact, custodians of boys rather than teachers. They were content to see work scrambled through, discipline ignored in the spirit, provided it was observed in the letter, and morals corrupted, so long as there was no scandal; it was only when a boy proved unruly that they woke up, and imagined they did their duty by throwing him off their hands, instead of keeping him and trying to make him more reasonable. The present Head Master of Eton, Dr. Hornby,* is neither better nor worse than his predecessors.

But if the head-masters of Eton have been listless the assistant-masters have in general been apathetic and incompetent, as men must be who have no active chief to keep them up to a high mark. The rule of most Eton masters ever has been, and is, to stimulate such few boys as show an eagerness to work, and to leave the others to follow their own devices. They complain that they are too busy to do justice to all, that their school divisions are of unwieldy size, that twenty pupils are the utmost that a master can conscientiously manage, and that, in fact, they are all

* Doctor Hornby has been appointed Provost of Eton College since the above was written.

overworked; but while uttering these lamentations every master has constantly striven to stuff his house with as many boys as he could get, and one was not so long ago dismissed for the ostensible reason that he refused to limit his number of boarders to forty-five, *i.e.*, to twice as many as he could by any possibility superintend.*

To grow rich, to have little trouble, to maintain pleasant social relations with the parents of aristocratical pupils, these have been the objects of the Eton masters' ambition; and few of them have ever bestowed any pains upon training boyish natures that showed a tendency to grow crooked. From the moment a lad comes up to Eton he is treated much as a full-grown man. Outside school he is subject to no supervision; and even in school he may do only just as much work as suits him, trusting to his luck to avoid punishment. He grows up in lazy, extravagant habits: he becomes a dawdler, sometimes an affected coxcomb, and if he does not very often come

* The master in question is the Rev. Oscar Browning, and it is only fair to state that at the time of his dismissal there were several houses which contained, and contain to this day, more than 45 boys, one had 58. The true reason of Mr. Browning's dismissal was that he and the Head Master could not work together; and Dr. Hornby would have acted more candidly in avowing this, than in trying to fix upon his subordinate the stigma of having acted in a way which outsiders, knowing nothing of Eton, may have thought improper. Mr. Browning only followed the Eton custom in trying to fill his house, but in most respects he was superior to the average run of Eton masters. He is a man of high attainments and principle—industrious, liberal-minded, and was highly popular amongst his pupils. Perhaps his too great popularity was not a merit in the eyes of Dr. Hornby, whose qualities are not of the endearing sort.

to grief, it is because in general his relatives are rich enough to cast his after-lines in smooth places.

But Eton is a giant academy of dunces. Ninetenths of the boys who leave it know nothing. They have learned to dress and talk well, to wear smoothly brushed hats, to tie a white cravat properly, to swim, pull an oar, play football and cricket, drink beer and champagne; but there their accomplishments end. Even in such small talents as are desiderated in British squires they are deficient. Set up one of them to make a speech on a hustings or at a harvest dinner, and his confusion is entertaining to witness. He blushes, stammers, wriggles, and is occasionally reduced to mouthing his ideas by the help of a piece of paper pasted in the bottom of his hat. Yet Eton boasts her debating societies, and Sixth-form boys are educated to address large audiences of their school-fellows at periodical intervals in the Upper School, where they wear tight breeches and black-silk stockings to encourage them.



II.

OF VARIOUS ETON BOYS.

WE have said that when a boy comes to Eton he finds himself treated much like a full-grown man. To begin with he has a room to himself, with a fireplace and a bureau, a cupboard full of crockery, a teapot, kettle, and a saucepan. He takes breakfast and tea by himself, or forms a mess with one or more of the boys in his boarding house. Rations of tea or coffee and sugar are served out to him weekly, and of bread and butter morning and evening. Nobody has a right to control his commissariat, which is limited only by the resources of his exchequer. If he can afford it, he may fill himself with sausages, eggs, jam, and potted meats without stint.

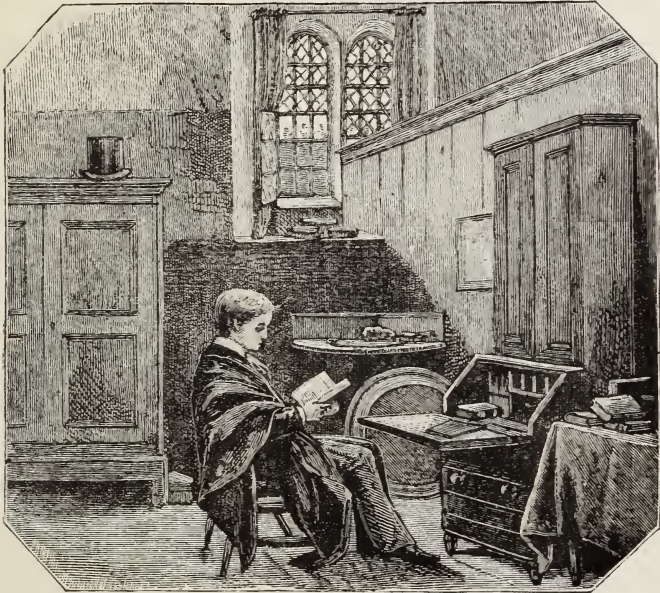
Every boy adds to the furniture of his room such adornments as he pleases in the way of pictures, clocks, and chimney nick-nacks. An Etonian is not so well-lodged as a University Undergraduate, but often better than an officer living within barracks. He takes care of his own linen and clothes. He puts on what apparel he likes, keeping only to the rule of wearing a tall hat, black jacket, and black necktie, or else a

white tie if he be in "tails"—that is, coats. Should he desire a new hat or garment, he has only to ask his tutor for an order on the hosier or tailor, and mostly gets it without parley. Some of the older boys deal directly with the tradesmen, who supply them *ad libitum*, and send the bills to their parents. It is thus that habits of economy are inculcated at an early age!

To be sure Etonians have not much need to study economy, for few of them are poor; but those of their number who stand in the case of having to earn their bread in after life cannot but suffer sorely from the temptations to expenditure and debt thrown in their way. Almost all the Eton tradesmen give "tick"—some directly urge their young customers to accept goods on credit. A boy can run up bills with the confectioner, picture-dealer, fives-ball vendor, and with various tavern-keepers up the river. Some get in debt for beer, wine, and tobacco. Dr. Hornby has made a rule that a boy seen entering any of the Windsor hotels shall be expelled; but these places of entertainment are largely frequented on the sly, and more than one lad has learned in them the first lessons of intemperance, destined to bear bad fruit by-and-by.

Parents in moderate circumstances who send their boys to Eton, in the hopes of their making valuable aristocratical acquaintances, may be sure that the first thing learned by the lads will be to live above their means and to be idle. No glory is to be got at Eton

by working. Lessons are learned by “cribs.” A boy who wants to be thought a “swell” reads up his Homer or Horace just well enough to escape getting a



pæna of a hundred lines if called up to construe, and he crams himself for the half-yearly trials, or examinations, just as much as may be necessary to obtain him his remove.

If a boy does more than this—if he seek to master his lessons thoroughly, and to take a good place in the examinations, he is contemptuously called a “sap;” and might as well be at Rossall or Shrewsbury for all the social benefit he is likely to derive from the school. The workers at Eton, are the seventy founda-

tion scholars, complimentarily termed "tugs," and some few Oppidans, who are not unfrequently boys of delicate health unable to take part in sports. Peers' younger sons occasionally "sap," and such a thing has been seen as a peer's first-born who made light of the title of "muff" (usually appended to that of "sap") and went in bravely for assiduous book-work ; but these studiously inclined young noblemen belong to the phoenix species, and they are seldom much liked by their companions.

The dislike to incurring the epithet of "muff" induces an Etonian to make an early choice as to whether he shall be a "dry-bob" or a "wet-bob." If



ETON COLLEGE FROM THE THAMES.



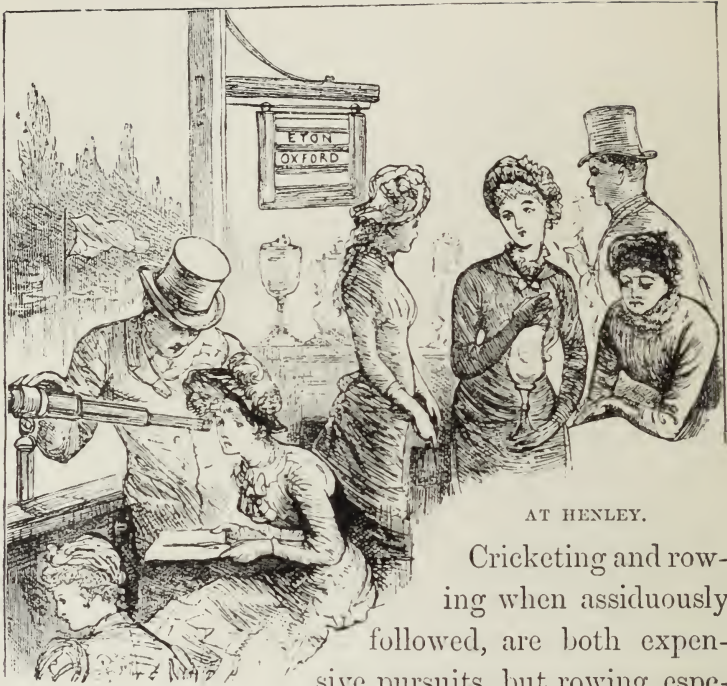
AT THE ETON AND HARROW CRICKET MATCH.



FUTURE, PRESENT, AND PAST.

the former, he devotes himself to cricket in the hope of ultimately figuring in a light blue cap at Lord's in the match against Harrow; if he prefers aquatics, he first passes his swimming examination, then hires a "chance-boat" or a lock-up" * for the year at Goodman's or Salter's. He may cherish the ambition of getting into the eight, and competing for the Ladies' Challenge Plate at Henley, or failing that, he will be content to enter the "Boats," which is the abbreviated name for the School Boating Club, which comprises eight 8-oars and one 10-oar.

* For £2 10s. or £3 a-year a boy can hire a "chance-boat," *i.e.* the right to take his chance of any of the skiffs on the boat-builders' rafts. For £5 he hires a boat which is exclusively his own.



AT HENLEY.

Cricketing and rowing when assiduously followed, are both expensive pursuits, but rowing especially so. The "dry-bobs" are a steadier class of boys than the "wet," and it has been noticed that they seldom go wrong in after life. Once they begin to shine at cricket, the game absorbs all their spare moments and keeps them out of mischief. First, as Lower boys, they play in "Sixpenny;" then, on reaching the Fifth-form they are enrolled in the Lower Club, and finally they are promoted to the Upper Club, where the glories of the Eleven or the Twenty-two may await them. At this stage, they take tea three times a week, during the summer-half, in the open air under the trees of Poet's Walk. On school-match days, those who are in



“AV YER COLOURS, GENTS.”

the Eleven lunch and dine at their own expense with the team that has come down to play against them ; and in the course of the half are saddled with the extra cost of the two days' match at Lord's, and the match against Winchester, which is played on alternate years at Eton and in Hampshire.

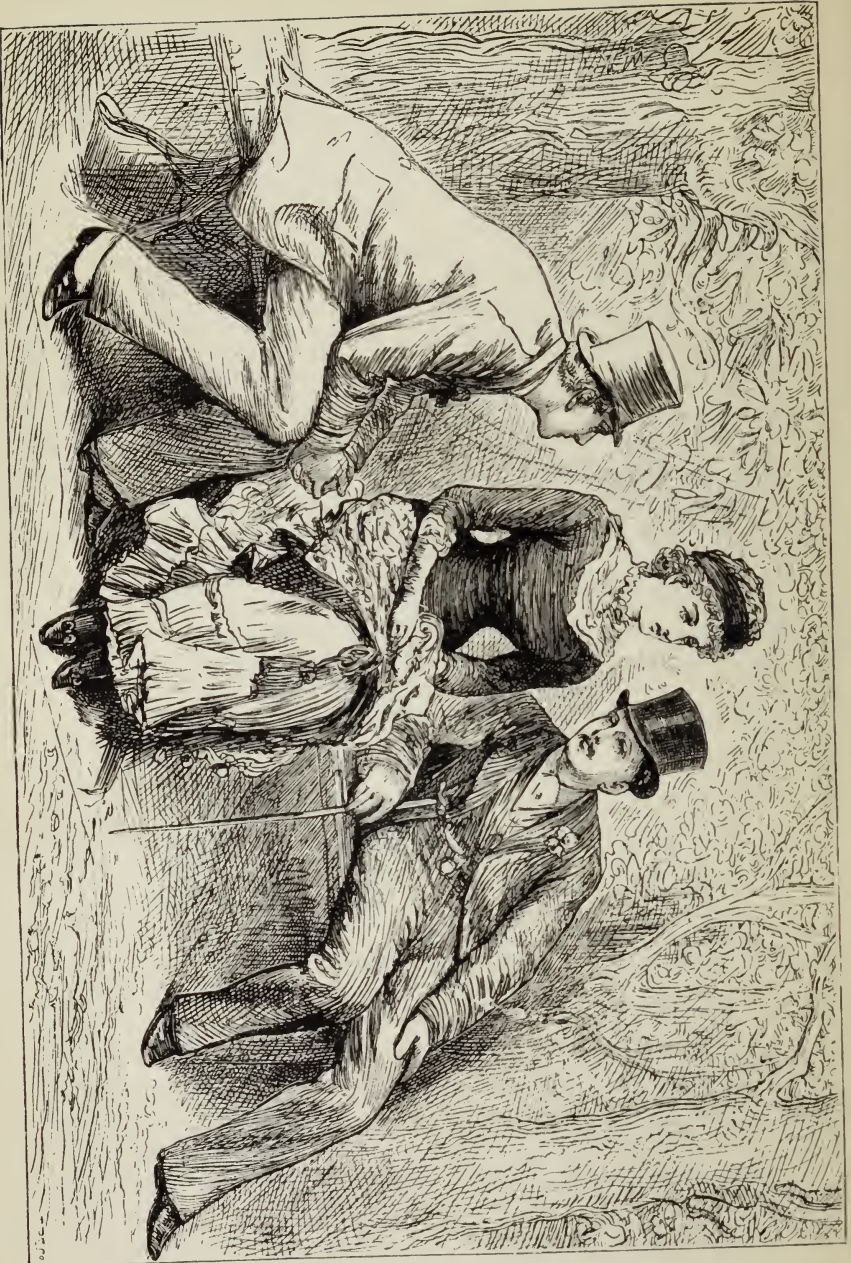
The expenses of a boy in the Eleven amount to



“WHOSE HAT WILL GET IT ?”

about £25 during the midsummer half, and sometimes exceed that sum, but the expenditure of time is a much more serious item, for it may be said, that a boy in the Eleven does nothing but play. He prepares his work in odd half-hours, frequently gets his Latin verses done for him by some friendly "sap," and contrives to toil through his construing in school by means of English words written in pencil over the Latin and Greek ones. But his form master is sure to be indulgent to him in consideration of his prowess with the bat or ball. It would be thought an ill-natured thing of a tutor to set *pœnas* to a lad whose excuse for unlearned lessons was that he had been practising to sustain the supremacy of his school over Harrow.

"Wet bobs" waste even more time than dry ones, and to much less profit, for it is only a small minority of them who take to rowing for rowing's sake, and seriously strive to perfect themselves in oarsmanship. The rest loaf about the river in skiffs and outriggers; scull up to Surley Hall and Mrs. Franklin's at Monkey Island, where they drink beer; or moon about the Brocas in flannel shirts, chaffing the boat-builders' men. Their life becomes a grand lounge—a perfected system of laziness. They bet on boat races, learn to bandy words with bargees, and become adepts in the emptying of pewters. Thus far they get as Lower boys, but when they reach Fifth-form and can enter the "Boats" they find additional incentives to dissipation,



ETON VERSUS HARROW : A DRAWN GAME.



SURLEY.

for they pull up to the riverside taverns in crews of eight, and often get leave for half-holiday water parties, which include a champagne dinner at Monkey Island or Maidenhead.

Then there is the 4th of June regatta, when the boats all go up processionally to Surley for an *al fresco* supper followed by a row back in the dusk, and fireworks off the eyot near Windsor Bridge. This is a regular carnival, pretty to look at and agreeable to join in. The crews all wear fancy sailor's costumes, beflowered straw hats, and gilt-buttoned jackets, lined and faced with black or white silk. The coxwains are attired as admirals, naval captains, or midshipmen, and sport huge nosegays. Crowds of carriages containing friends and strangers follow the boats to Surley; and hundreds of Lower boys mingling with the cads of the county of Bucks throng round the ables where the supper is spread. There is a hamper

of champagne to every boat's crew, to say nothing of claret and sherry. Toasts are proposed and drunk one after another without heel-taps. After the third glass the young oarsmen get lively, and begin passing bumpers over their shoulders to the Lower boys, who scream and fight for them.

Many of these youngsters get maudlin drunk on the spot, drop down and have to be carried back to college by good Samaritans; others have legs enough left to stagger along with, yelling or weeping as they go. It is not a rare thing on 4th of June nights for a couple of hundred boys to be the worse for liquor, but it is the custom of the place, and no notice is taken by the authorities, except in cases where the tipsiness has been uproarious, and led to some scandal. In this event the juvenile tippler is taught the virtue of sobriety by a good birching; and there the matter ends till the following year, when the same thing repeats itself.

It is fair to state, however, that drunkenness has declined at Eton of late years. Ten years or so ago there was an Election Saturday regatta, besides that on the 4th of June, and five-and-twenty years ago there were a series of "Check nights" on alternate Saturdays through the summer half, when it was the custom for all the "Boats" to fuddle themselves in private banquets. Old Etonians can also recollect the "Oppidan dinner" at the White Hart at Windsor which used to close the summer half; and "leaving

breakfasts" which boys who left the school were expected to give to those who had presented them with "leaving books."

All these feasts were occasions for hard drinking, which kept Dr. Goodford's birch in active employment, but elicited no other remonstrance on his part. The worthy Doctor was even averse from flogging for such trifles, and had brought his assistants to wink at as much inebriation as did not entail an absolute loss of equilibrium and power of speech. Oppidan dinner has now vanished, and Dr. Hornby has abolished leaving books, so that leaving breakfasts have ceased to be customary. The Windsor hotel-keepers mourn the decline in topping which has resulted from these changes, and talk of Eton as being a much slower school than it formerly was.

It is not so slow as all that, however, for present Etonians are allowed amusements which were sternly denied to their predecessors. What would old Dr. Hawtrey have thought could he have foreseen that a time would come when the whole school would be suffered to attend the Windsor races, and mix twice a year for three consecutive days with all the social scum which pollutes second class racecourses in these days? It is curious to watch the crowd of well-dressed boys, mingling on the turf with a mob of sharpers, black-legs, book-makers, thimble-riggers, and stable-men. They enliven the proceedings, for they cheer their favourites as if they were witnessing an honest contest of speed

on their own river; but they also bet, they haunt the refreshment booths, taking strong pulls of beer or American drinks, and they are worked into a fearful state of excitement, and horsey passion by the atmosphere of noise and tobacco, stable slang and foul oaths of disappointed backers.

Masters occasionally prowl about the course, looking oddly out of place in their black clothes and white ties, but they cannot keep their eyes everywhere at once. Demure rogues are on the watch for the boys, enticing their half-sovereigns with offers of long odds. Fluffy-haired houris from London ogle the elder ones from waggonettes, or the box seats of regimental drags. If one of these striplings is known to be a Lord or a banker's heir, he is coaxed into accepting champagne cup, and his charmers take care to slip their cards into his hand that he may know where to find them in London during the holidays; and should a master unexpectedly hover near the spot, these affable ladies will tell their young dupe, giddy with mocking wine and flattery, to lie down flat in the bottom of the vehicle while they cover him up, giggling, with their skirts until that kill-joy tutor is out of sight.

Dr. Hornby does not expressly allow these things. He does not give the boys a holiday that they may have more leisure to improve their minds by association with bad company, but he does not prohibit them from attending the races, nor cause them to be sent back to college and punished if they are seen there.



It is a queer inconsistency which renders a lad liable to expulsion for entering a respectable hotel, while suffering him to mix in scenes which even grown-up persons find morally insalubrious; but one may suppose that Dr. Hornby's ideas as to the so-called manly sport of

racing are derived from the days when he himself was young, and the ring was comparatively pure beside what it is now.

Windsor fair, held yearly in October, is another of the things which has ceased to be interdicted nowadays. O Etonians of the past, what a change is there from the times when to wander among the booths of Thames Street led to almost certain swishing, and when to be caught in Bachelor's Acre among the shows of learned pigs and giantesses, the rifle-galleries, and the clandestine roulette tables, meant "twelve cuts and turning down?" Who does not remember those frantic chevies down Castle Hill, when a dozen boys, scampering like hares, would fling a shilling to some cad to trip up the master who was running behind? Many a divine has measured his length along those hard flags—many a one who was darting across the Acre in pursuit of his juvenile quarry has been stopped by a cocoa-nut flung full in his face by the unerring hand of a gipsy.

It was the smaller boys who suffered most then, for the elder ones knew of the snug places between tents whose every approach was well guarded by sturdy scamps, and where they could lose handfuls of pocket money, to their hearts' content, with loaded dice, or roulette wheels, whose careering ball the squinting croupier knew well how to stop when it suited him. Sometimes there were fierce battles between boys who guessed they were being robbed and their



AN ETON MASTER BROUGHT SUDDENLY UP AT WINDSOR FAIR

despoilers, who sought to scare them away from claiming their own by the cry, "Here's the masters a comin'." Then stalls would be wrecked, and tent pegs pulled up; Aunt Sally sticks would be used as missiles, bleeding noses and cracked pates would abound, and, after the whole Acre had been thrown into a state of turmoil resembling an Irish faction-fight, a grand charge would be made towards one of the shows, and the learned pig, squealing madly, would be borne off to college as a hostage and a trophy.

Bachelor's Acre is still, we believe, forbidden ground, except to the Sixth-form, but the other parts of the fair are free, and we make little doubt that the owners of the gambling tables have transferred their portable paraphernalia to nooks round the Town Hall, and that dicing, *rouge et noir*, and what not, continue to clean out Etonian pockets during a yearly fortnight of joy, as much as they ever did.*

Eton is essentially a fast school, and must continue to be so, as long as it remains the favourite educational place of the very rich. The quieter sort of country squires, men with £5000 a year or so, who

* It is characteristic of the way in which things were done at Eton not so long ago, that although the fair was strictly forbidden, several masters used to give their boys double allowance of pocket-money to spend at the fair! But those were the days of *shirking*, when a boy might go out of bounds provided he made pretence of hiding, by walking into a shop, or behind a hedge, at sight of a master. In those days Windsor Castle was in bounds, and all the approaches to it out of bounds. Dr. Hornby has abolished these anomalies.

in their day formed the *élite* of Eton, have rather left off sending their sons there, finding that the incursion of the plutocracy has destroyed its character for selectness. The wealthier and higher class of peers may also possibly take a dislike to it before long, for it is not always thought desirable by a Duke or an Earl that his sons should be brought up in the companionship of *nouveaux riches*, whose fortunes have not necessarily been amassed with clean fingers. Every man who has made his money rapidly in joint stock companies, Australian mines, or American railways, Lisbon tramways, or foreign army contracts, nowadays, sends his sons to Eton, that they may get the polish which was denied to himself; and he is equally satisfied whether they mix with lordlings and honourables, or with the offspring of the more respectable merchants, bankers, brewers, and M. P.s, who look askance at him when they meet. Eton overflows with "new blood," and smells rank of fresh gilding.

It is unquestionable, though, that its *alumni* do get a polish not to be obtained elsewhere. The roughest cub is planed down there to a smoothness which he retains all his life. It is not the result of hard knocks either, for there is no bullying at Eton, and pugilism has become unfashionable. The days are long gone by when a meet at "sixpenny wall" was the obligatory termination to any difference of opinion; and even shinning-matches, originally imported by squirelings

from the wilds of Lancashire, have come to be thought dreadfully bad form.

The smoothness which Etonians acquire is due to the rubbing with little gentlemen who have been admirably brought up at home, and who have imbibed dignity with nurses' milk. Sons of peers, magistrates, and great employers of labour, they have had servants since they could toddle, and know perfectly how their inferiors should be addressed. No boy can infuse such a mixture of good-humoured condescension and *hauteur* as an Etonian, into his apostrophes to policemen, boatmen, apple-vendors, and butlers. He calls all these people generically "cads," but is not offensive towards them, and they admit his imposing superiority even when his stature scarcely exceeds that of two hats juxtaposed.

Then Etonians are scrupulous enough in their pecuniary dealings with one another. If they bet they pay on the nail. They are shy about borrowing money; they regard it as one of the grossest offences for an "old fellow" to wheedle a loan of money, or a gift in "sock" (dainties) from a "new fellow," and in general any shadiness of transaction leads to a social ostracism, which may affect the culprit even after he has left the school. Occasionally Etonians have committed robberies from their schoolfellows, and been expelled for it, but such offences are extremely rare considering how populated the school is, and what facilities exist for the perpetration of petty thefts; any-

how the whole school would resentⁱ as a bitter insult such a notice as may be seen posted within the college doors at Cheltenham, requesting boys not to leave their watches or purses about so as to avoid tempting their companions.* The fact that such a notice should have been suffered by the boys to remain in a place where all eyes could read it, marks the profound difference between the spirit which prevails at the minor schools and that which rules at Eton.

Again, Etonians learn to take care of themselves pretty soon, and at the Universities they are steadier than the boys from other schools. The liberty they enjoy makes them self-reliant; and the variety of amusements to which they have been accustomed, renders them in a manner *blasés* for anything that Oxford or Cambridge has to offer. What care they for wines or good dinners—they who have always fed high and tiddled champagne freely? They experience no such sudden sense of liberty, as exhilarates and often bewilders the youth who has been trained at a place where discipline was strict.

If it were only for this, Eton would deserve to be favourably noted; and indeed should the school ever be thoroughly reformed, no one would care to see the freedom of the boys much restricted. It is certainly desirable to keep them off race-courses; but the other improvements should be chiefly directed towards

* We saw this notice at Cheltenham in the time of Dr. Jex-Blake, now head-master of Rugby. It has, perhaps, been removed since.

making them work when they profess to be at work, in order that the money of their parents may not be spent solely on procuring for them the polish above mentioned, which, though a good thing in its way, may be bought too dear. Idleness in school begets indolence in playtime, and thence follows a languor of manners, tending to moral supineness in after-life—Eton turns out gentlemen, but not men—*exceptis excipiendis*.



HER FIRST INNINGS.

III.

RUGBY AND RUGBEIANS.

AT Rugby, where the "Muscular Christian" was first developed, it is precisely contrary to what it is at Eton. The principle laid down by Dr. Arnold, and revived after an interval of collapse by his fourth successor Dr. Temple, was that boys should be made to take an



GATEWAY OF RUGBY SCHOOL.

active interest in all they do. Be they at work or play let them do it with all their might. Dr. Arnold cared little for his boys to be polished gentlemen, but he wished them to be men and Englishmen—bold, rational, truthful, and energetic. He succeeded in making some of them queerly opinionated. The characteristic of the Rugbeian since his time has not been excess of modesty; it is even pretended that in the common rooms at the Universities, at regimental and circuit messes, the Rugbeian is apt to make his presence felt after the same manner as the hedgehog did when he got into the hole where the toads were. But it is something to possess strong opinions and to hold to them, nor will such intellectual bristles as sprout over the model “Rug” ever hinder him in jostling his way to the foremost ranks of life—much the contrary.

It was the glory of Arnold that he discovered the secret of managing boys otherwise than by the rod. He became as it were the head boy in his school. He liked boys. He knew how to stimulate everything that was good in each of them. He encouraged them to confide fearlessly in him and in their tutors. He accepted their words as those of grown men, and thereby taught them to shun falsehood. Withal, he set his face against every form of affectation, and took care that his pupils should remain boys in spirit and action till the proper time came for them to put away boyish things. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had

advocated these theories long before the Rugby head-master endeavoured to put them into practice, and they were in truth deemed so impracticable, that it was lucky Arnold kept his place long enough to make converts and watch the seeds of his teaching bear harvest, else his new system would all have been uprooted by his three next successors, Dr. Wool—a very Orbilius; Dr. Goulburn, the present Dean of Norwich; and the late Archbishop of Canterbury, who were all head-masters on the Eton pattern.

It was naturally a part of Arnold's plan to surround himself with assistants who understood boys as he did, and were willing to throw all their hearts into their work. Dr. Temple caught up this principle, and had organised so powerful a staff that Dr. Hayman, who succeeded him, was unable to manage it. This is not the place to revive the Hayman controversy, but those who pity this ill-used master must allow that Rugby had found a more suitable ruler in Dr. Jex-Blake, who was once a pupil, and by-and-by an assistant master in the school, and is impact with all the best traditions of the place. Zealousness in superintending boys may be a quality which Dr. Jex-Blake pushes a trifle too far, but none can deny that his activity proceeds from a sincere interest in the welfare of his young charges; and after all it may be difficult for a head-master to hit the happy mean between over-care and the laxity which we have blamed in respect of Eton.

This much is certain, that the assistant masters of Rugby who help Dr. Blake, tower by a head and shoulders in worth over those of Eton.* Of their comparative merits as scholars we do not speak, for we are concerned only with their work as trainers of youth, and a few words as to two of them, the Revs. Neville and Christopher Hutchinson, will show what grit is in these men, and how safely any parent might remit a boy to their hands.

Mr. Neville Hutchinson and his brother are the sons of an architect established at Birmingham, who died when they were both young, and left them almost unprovided for. They had been well taught, however, at King Edward's Grammar School, and had set their hearts on going to the University. Other young men of less spirit might have sat down and moaned all their lives at the loss of opportunities caused by their father's death ; but they did not. Neville having obtained a small schoolmastership, Christopher was entered as a sizar at St. John's, Cambridge, and during three years his brother paid his expenses there out of his slender earnings. In due time, and after unremitting labour, Christopher took a first-class degree and obtained a fellowship, then it became his turn to help his brother, who, coming up to the same college, ended also by winning his first-class honours and fellowship. The

* The Rev. Edmond Warre and Mr. R. A. H. Mitchell must be mentioned as brilliant exceptions among Eton masters. Their influence over the boys, and on the *morale* of the school has been unquestionably beneficial. It is only to be regretted that there are not more like them.

two brothers eventually married two sisters and came to Rugby, where their work has been all that might have been expected of such men, who are as popular for their genial hearty goodness as they are honoured for their talents and splendid strength of character.

The Reverend Robert Mayor, who now holds a benefice in Essex, is another of those masters whom any school might be proud to boast. It happened while Mr. Mayor was at Rugby, that the father of a boy in his house was ruined, and was compelled to give notice that he should remove his son from the school. But the boy was getting on well with his studies, and his tutor thought it such a pity that his prospects should be marred, that he generously kept the lad for two years more without any remuneration. We might cite many an instance of Etonians whose fathers were ruined, but we have never heard of one whose tutor thought good to assume the cost of his education after such a catastrophe; nor do we think anybody else could quote such a case.

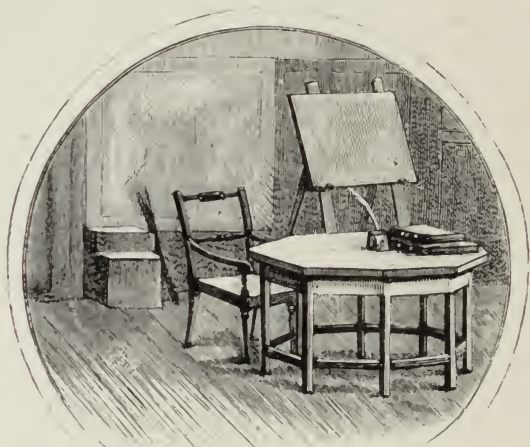
Rugby is a school of rough games. Big-side football is a most trying ordeal to the nerves and shins; and "house-washing" which consists in jumping by batches of boys into a muddy ditch until every jumper is soaked through, is one of those sports in which no human being, save a British boy could take any delight. Then tossing in blankets is held in high honour as a pastime for whiling away long evenings; and so is "corking" as an amusement for odd half-

hours in the school-yard. Corking is a kind of pitched battle with tennis balls, which the boys fling at one another as hard as they can. If a boy can catch with his hand the missile aimed at his pate so much the better, if not the next best thing is to evince his agility by ducking down and exposing a more honourable part of his person as a target. In snowy winters there are desperate encounters with snowballs between Rugbeians and the "cads" of the town. These last stand in the Dunchurch Road, while the schoolboys keep to their close. Woe then to the adventurous cad who comes too near to the low wooden railing that marks the close boundary: he will remember his impudence for a long time.

Despite all this there is no more bullying at Rugby than there is at Eton. The "Sixth," (who have monitorial powers, not exercised by those at the more aristocratical school,) promptly chastise any hobbledehoy who tyrannizes over a little fellow, and if needful the punishment is inflicted with a certain solemnity in the presence of the whole Sixth in the Library. It is a custom at Rugby to leave a good deal of authority to the Sixth-form in maintaining order out of school, so that the surveillance of the masters is lessened in proportion, and the Head-Master is relieved of the necessity for much flogging.

The birch, which plays an important part in Eton education, has become well-nigh obsolete at Rugby. Etonians are birched for the merest trifles. A pert

reply to a tutor, an ill-learned lesson, a tell-tale smell of tobacco hanging about a jacket and not satisfactorily accounted for, are all enough to secure for a boy a short but painful interview with Dr. Hornby in the Sixth-form room which is adorned with a whipping-



block, or with Mr. Durnford in the Lower School, where also stands one of those wooden apparatus adapted for suppliant attitudes. Dr. Hornby, when he took office and received the customary presentation birch tied up with blue ribbons, from the captain of the school, hinted that he should make but a sparing use of this implement, but he has not fulfilled the pledge. Mr. Durnford, who is a regular type of the old birching divine, compromised himself by no promise, and his energy in flourishing the rod, seems to indicate that he takes as great a pleasure in scholastic executions, as did Dr. Keate of terrible memory.

At Rugby since the time of Dr. Wool—who, being a man of little stature and fond of whipping, left a reputation which caused his reign to be styled, “much cry and little wool”—at Rugby corporal punishment has declined more and more until now there are scarcely more than half-a-dozen floggings in the course of a year. The punishment is reserved for very heinous offences, as for idleness so persistent as to prove that a boy is unamenable to gentle influences ; and in such cases the victims may be said to get no more than they deserve.

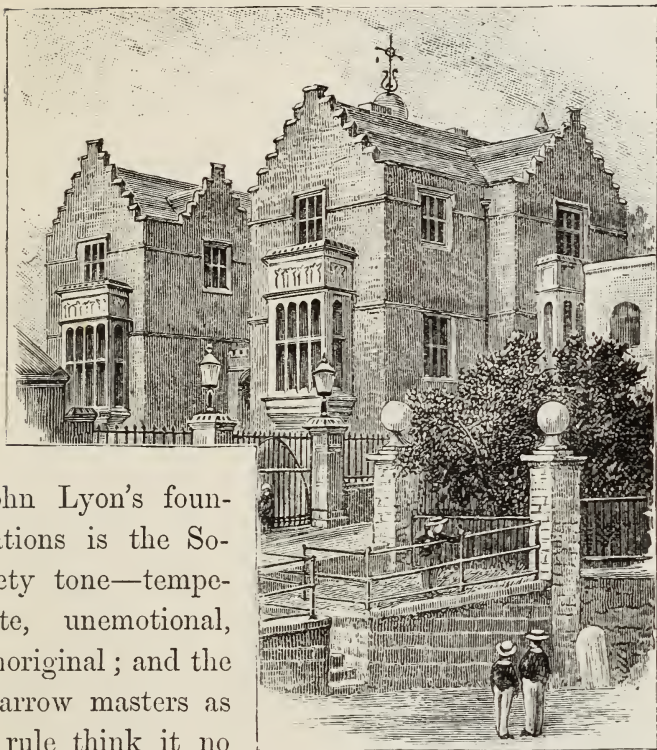
For the rest the Sixth are empowered to set “impots” or punishment lines to boys whom they find smoking, straying out of bounds, or doing wanton damage of any kind. They are also licensed to inflict six cuts with a cane should they find the punishment lines fail in effect ; and the masters, knowing that these powers are conscientiously wielded, prefer to rely on them as much as may be, and only take cognizance of offences too glaring to be passed over. It may be doubted, however, whether, if the matter were left to the choice of the boys, most of them would not rather receive ten cuts with a birch from Dr. Jex-Blake, than six with a cane from a Sixth-form boy. An earnest monitor is a wonderful searcher out of tender places.

IV.

HARROW, WINCHESTER, WESTMINSTER.

HARROW is a cross between Eton and Rugby, and its special characteristics are not numerous enough to demand much notice. Harrovians are less languid than Etonians, less rough, ready and well-taught than "Rugs." Since Eton has become the resort of the flash plutocracy, Harrow has advanced more and more in the favour of the squires, and there are signs that it will gradually be accepted as the more select school of the two. Its pupils make excellent country gentlemen, capital cricketers, and racket-players—there being no river to divert the energies of the boys into two currents. They also take more pride in their rifle-corps than does Eton; but they do not shine at book-work.

The few brilliant scholars which the school has produced since Dr. Vaughan's time, cannot be matched for number against those exceptional stars which occasionally flash out from Eton; and Eton, thanks to the encouragement held out by the Prince Consort's prizes, distinctly holds the palm over Harrow for modern languages. In all other respects the schools stand pretty well back to back. The tone cultivated at



John Lyon's foundations is the Society tone—temperate, unemotional, unoriginal; and the Harrow masters as a rule think it no part of their duty

to force a boy into working if he has a dislike so to do. As long as he can pull through his examination his performances are considered satisfactory, even though the sum of his acquirements when he reaches the top forms may not be sufficient to fit him to enter the army or matriculate at Balliol without a three months' cramming from a private "coach."

HARROW SCHOOL.

But what shall be said of Westminster? West-



GATEWAY, WESTMINSTER SCHOOL.

minster has woefully degenerated since the pre-railway times, when it boasted five hundred boys, and when its "eight" could beat Eton on the river. It is a school of fine traditions. Dryden, Cowper, Warren Hastings, and Anglesey were educated there; and so was Earl

Russell, who, however, did not send his son to be trained under the shadow of the old Abbey. Nowadays, one would hardly hope to find the scion of a ducal house on the list which Mr. Ginger puts forth from his pokey little bookseller's shop in College Street. There are sons of lawyers, clergymen, and Indian officers. The school is convenient for parents who live in London and wish to have their boys under their own eyes, or for those who, being on foreign service, have friends in town to whose care they may consign their sons.

Apart from these considerations, the college possesses such valuable exhibitions that, if it were better known, if its masters were more able, and if one or two reforms were introduced by the governing body, Westminster would soon recover its prestige and popularity. A large public school of the best sort is wanted in London, and if the outcry for removing Westminster to the country were listened to, there would soon be a movement for instituting an equivalent in its place. It will be much better to keep the school where it is, but to improve away the abuses which hinder its growth.

These abuses are of many kinds. First, the school having three yearly exhibitions to Christ Church, Oxford, and as many to Trinity College, Cambridge, these are open only to the fourth year boys on the foundation. This foundation comprises forty boys called Queen's scholars, who are divided into four

“elections,” each of which has a year’s seniority over the other; but the numbers in each election vary so that a few years ago there being only seven of the senior election, these seven were found competing for the six exhibitions. Fourteen is the greatest number that has ever figured in one election; and considering how valuable the exhibitions are (those at Christ Church are junior studentships worth £120 a-year with free rooms for four years), it would not be too much to ask that they should be thrown open to the school.

Again, the Queen’s scholars remain classed during four years in exactly the same order as when they passed on to the foundation; that is, the boy who takes the first place keeps it, whether he toil hard or not, and becomes captain of the school three years later; the next three become monitors, and the last remains last to the end of the chapter, notwithstanding that by dint of hard work he may have become the best scholar in the school. This immutable classification naturally damps emulation, and converts many a promising lad into a careless skimmer of lessons, besides souring him a little by the constant recollection of a failure past recall. It is not fair that a boy should be allowed no chance of retrieving an early defeat; nor that one who has carried the first place perhaps by a fluke, when he was fourteen, should be suffered to retain it till the end of his school-time without any new trials to test his continuing fitness for the honour.

Dr. Scott, who has been Head Master of Westminster

many years, is one of the most finished scholars in England, and a pleasant man too, but as a ruler he is humdrum, and his assistants are quite as routine-ridden as himself. It is their fault if Westminster holds no higher rank than it does. They are easy men of second-rate abilities whom the notion of change scares. Well-wishers are not wanting who have told them what things are needed to convert Westminster into a school of first-rate order, and to make it a real boon to Londoners, but not one of them will put his finger to the good work. This is the greater pity, as in teaching such few boys as they have these masters have been successful. Having small classes they can more readily check idleness; and Dr. Scott's form especially are admirably instructed. Those of them who fail to take honours at the Universities are the exception.

The peculiarities of Westminster are numerous. Its Queen's scholars wear caps, gowns, and white ties. They are admitted to attend the debates in the House of Commons, and may pass in to the reserved place behind the bar on the days when the House is most crowded, and when hundreds of ordinary folks are applying in vain for admission. Every year, in December, these Queen's scholars enact the famous "Westminster Play," which is a comedy of Terence or Plautus, with a prologue and epilogue by some "Old Westminster." On these occasions the dormitory is converted into a theatre. There is a stage, scenery, classical costumes, and on three nights the old build-

ings, where the shades of Edward the Confessor, of Elizabeth and Dr. Busby may hover, are thronged by distinguished visitors, who take a pleasure in hearing crisp, Latin dialogue, smartly delivered by young fellows carefully trained in pronunciation and acting. The epilogue is usually a farce in elegiacs, performed in modern dresses, and abounding in epigrammatical allusions to the leading events of the day.

A fair thing and mighty pretty (as Mr. Pepys, himself a "Westminster," might have said,) to see. Bevy of ladies sit out these proceedings, and force up



courageous smiles as the jokes, of which they cannot understand a word, are rapturously applauded by the junior boys in the gallery. It is enough, however, that they should understand the sense of the "capping" which follows, when college caps are handed round among the audience for the collection of banknotes and gold to pay the expenses of the play. Often the sums raised in the three nights are considerable, and the surplus which remains, after the costumier and others have been satisfied, is divided among the boy-actors, —not, perhaps, a very dignified way of remunerating them, but one consecrated by long usage. As an institution unique in its way, the Westminster Play deserves to last, but there seems to be no reason why the town boys should not be allowed to take part in it, since in these days they are as much members of the school as the Queen's scholars.

The Westminster Town boys do not stand on quite the same footing as the Eton Oppidans, who look down on their King's scholars and call them "tugs." When they were more numerous they were as supercilious as the Etonians, and perhaps they may become so again should they ever form such a large majority as to grow independent of the Queen's scholars for their sports. But at present the Town boys mustering but one hundred and twenty, of whom but half reside in the two boarding houses of Little Dean's Yard, the foundation scholars are relatively too strong to be despised, and this suggests the query, whether the time

has not come for permanently removing in all schools the social inferiority which results from a charity dress and a separate style of living? Why should not "Town" and "Gown" be everywhere amalgamated, and the foundation benefits be made to consist of a yearly sum paid towards a boy's expenses in an ordinary boarding house? In French public schools things are managed in this way, and a *boursier's* schoolfellows do not always know that he is being educated for a less sum than they—he is frequently unaware of the fact himself.

There is urgency for some such reform in England, for at Eton, the position of the "tugs," though ameliorated of late years in the matter of creature comforts, is not enviable as regards the treatment they get from the Oppidans. They are made to feel the poverty of their parents as if it were a stigma; they are sneered at and chaffed about the mutton they eat; tricks are played with their gowns in school; and custom still debars them from intruding into Brown's, Barnes's, and Webber's (the Oppidan confectioners), but relegates them to Mother Trone's, a "sock shop" of their own. Such indignities, though flea-bites compared with the savage bullying they suffered in old times, are not calculated to enhance a boy's spirit, nor to promote good feeling in those who inflict them.

Westminster was until some fifteen or sixteen years ago a bullying school in all the ancient force of the

word. Small boys in college were “buccassed” by the elders, *i.e.*, made to stand at “attention” while their cheeks were slapped with might and main, or they were chastised with rackets—horrible implements. But these cruelties have now ceased, and the only objection that can fairly be taken to the school is that it stands in close proximity to the Westminster Aquarium, and the Haymarket; and that the boys in going to their playground at Vincent Square are obliged to pass through a number of squalid streets. But these drawbacks have been exaggerated, for it is not proven that the boys feel much attraction towards the Aquarium and the Haymarket, or could get there easily if they did. Whilst in respect of the slums that hedge in Vincent Square, their very unsavouriness would repel well-bred lads from loitering in them.

Westminster boasts a good play-ground in Dean’s Yard besides that at Vincent Square, and a racket court in Little Dean’s Yard, to say nothing of a first-rate gymnasium, and the Abbey cloisters which make a rare strolling place in wet weather. On the whole the school is one whose advantages more than counter-balance its demerits; and it is but just to remark, that the tone inculcated on the boys is essentially gentlemanlike. “Westminsters” are always liked at the Universities; they have a modesty which puts Rugbeians to the blush, and yet a quiet pride in their school, and a promptness in rallying to its

rescue when attacked which are pleasing to see, and creditable.

We should like to say a good word for Winchester, but with the "tunding" scandal still fresh in one's memory, and recollecting above all the lame way in which Dr. Ridding hobbled out of the scrape into which this grievous business led him, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that William of Wykeham's foundation is an ill-managed place. Were it not it would probably have more boys than it has, for there is no earthly reason save mismanagement why such time-honoured and richly endowed schools as these should let themselves be distanced by new places like Cheltenham, Rossall, and Marlborough. Winchester has everything in its favour: a great name, a first-rate situation, a close connection with one of the Oxford colleges (New) and yet the school has shrunk more and more while newer ones expanded, and whenever it has come prominently before the world of late, it has been in connection with something unpleasant.

Nobody need be proud of owning himself a Wykehamist nowadays, for the school has lost all distinctive *cachet* for good; though it may probably revive if on the retirement of Dr. Ridding,* the governing body have the judgment to appoint a man

* Dr. Ridding has been presented to the See of Southwell while this work was passing through the press.

of talent and nerve as his successor. One of the present assistant masters, Mr. Fearon, who took a double first class at Oxford and was President of the Union, would be just the man for the post.

We may mention fagging in connection with Winchester, for this institution has a greater range there than anywhere else. A relic of primitive times, when small schoolboys did most of the work that now devolves upon servants, and when even the sons of noblemen were sent to serve as pages in great houses, fagging is a good method for promoting discipline and taking conceit out of little urchins who on the strength of their birth or money might give themselves airs. The sight of a small Marquis toasting a crumpet for the future curate, who may some day beg a living of him hat in hand, may be ludicrous, but it is gratifying. Fagging only becomes an evil when boys are set to perform tasks which are above their strength, or which encroach too much on their time, and are set merely for the purpose of humouring the martinet tendencies of an elder youth devoid of gentlemanlike feeling. This is no longer the case at Eton, Harrow, or Rugby; at Westminster, fagging in college—that is among the Queen's scholars—is still a little more vexatious than it might be, but at Winchester it verges pretty closely upon tyranny.

At Eton any boy above the upper-Lower division of the Fifth-form may fag any boy below the Fifth, that is he may despatch him upon errands. To have a fag

of one's own, is another matter. It depends on the number of Lower boys available in a boarding-house. In some houses a boy has to wait until he is high in the middle-Fifth, before he can obtain one fag : in others he may get a couple as soon as he reaches upper-Lower, and have six by the time he is captain of the House.

A fag lays his master's breakfast, and tea-things, makes his tea or coffee, cooks his eggs, sausages or bloaters, and does other jobs. His duties may take him about twenty minutes, morning or evening, but seldom more, for Etonians are considerate, and the general opinion of a House would resent over-tasking. The grosser kinds of fagging have become obsolete at Eton. There is no blacking of boots, no enforced long-stopping, or fielding out at cricket, whilst a "slogging" master hits out all over the field, no obligation to do a lazy master's verses for him, or to scull him about the river whilst he reclines in the bows and dozes. An Upper boy who wants a message carried to a long distance—say to Windsor—muttera a semi-apology about it, and hearkens to the plea of "no time ;" or, if the business be urgent, he promises exemption from fagging for a day or two in consideration of this particular errand being performed. Sometimes Lower boys are requested to do illicit things, such as "keep *cave*" while their elders play whist or roulette—a function which consists in standing at the end of a passage and whistling a signal if the house-tutor be

heard approaching ; or they are sent to buy tobacco, or bring bottles of beer from the “ Tap ” in the High Street, wrapped up in flannel shirts, at the certain risk of being swished if caught. But in these cases an Upper boy always thanks the Lower one for his service, and perhaps would not enforce the order if a stand were made against it.

If one were to say that a young Lord got as much fagging at Eton as a commoner, the reader might feel sceptical, knowing that human nature, as regards the koo-tooing to dignities is the same everywhere, even among boys. But it is creditable to Etonians that they reverence titles much—very much—less than might be supposed ; and as a rule little Earls and Barons owe the alleviation of their tasks, rather to their own obedient alacrity than to any display of arrogance on their parts. Besides a small Earl is often cast as the fag of a bigger Earl, and then his rank avails him little.

At Winchester a fag is still looked upon as the “ slavey ” and beast of burden of his master. He is forced to sweep out studies ; to sit for dreary half-hours reading out the “ crib ” by which his master prepares his lessons. If he be clever, and his master the reverse, he is requested to do verses and themes. In summer he fields out, picking up balls for entire sweltering afternoons ; in winter he is made to keep goals at football, and shivers for bleak hours in piercing east winds. His time is never fairly his own. He is

called away from the preparation of his lessons to provide amusement for some dolt of a "master" by singing to him, or perhaps playing at "cock-fighting" with some other junior, each of them being bound hand and foot, and trussed under the knees with a poker.

Again, Winchester rejoices in an absurd slang vocabulary, in which lower boys are periodically catechised, and if they fail in knowledge of the foolish jargon they are "tunded" with ash-sticks. The monitorial power of inflicting corporal punishment which ought only to be conceded in grave circumstances, is allowed for trifles at Winchester; and there is very little gentlemanlike spirit in the school to control its exercise within merciful bounds. A school may become a purgatory if the tone which prevails in it is not one that prescribes gentleness towards the weak; and it is a positive fact that the lower boys of Winchester are much worse off than those at any other place.

Under the idea of promoting manliness, the elder boys cling to traditions of ill-usage and petty despotisms which are churlish, and promote nothing else but discomfort and discontent. No protest is excited if an upper boy punishes a fag by putting him in a corner and flinging boots at him. Nobody takes the part of the wretched junior if he is compelled to play against his will at rough sports for which his health unfits him. It may be noted, incidentally,



that floggings by the head-master are as frequent at Winchester as at Eton, but are usually inflicted on the small of the back with six apple-twigs. Birchings *a posteriori* are kept for the heavier offences, but they are deemed by cognoscenti less painful than the cuts with apple-twigs.

All the other schools besides those already enumerated belong to the second class of educational establishments, and are little patronized by the sons of the Upper Ten Thousand. The Charterhouse at Godalming, may, however, rank with Rugby for the excellence of the teaching which it provides; and so may Cheltenham, which under the rule of those praiseworthy headmasters Dr. Barry, Dr. Jex-Blake, and Dr. Snow, has risen to a high reputation, and has at present more than five hundred pupils. Cheltenham is the rising school of the future, and will probably apply before long for a royal charter which will ensure its stability. Though quite a young place, it has already sent some distinguished men into the world; among others Lord Wolseley.

Shrewsbury became a prosperous school, and seemed likely to be a famous one under Dr. Kennedy; but when the Master and Fellows of St. John's, Cambridge, who are its patrons, appointed Mr. Moss, they committed a mistake which has had damaging consequences. Mr. Moss is not remarkable for the sweetness of his temper. It was he who inflicted a brutal flogging of eighty-eight cuts with a birch upon a boy called Geoffrey Loxdale, and it passes comprehension that the governing body should have suffered him to retain office after such an exhibition of savagery. It was curious, however, though very characteristic of English schoolboys, how all the "Salopians" rallied from *esprit de corps* round their master—unpopular

as he is among them—when he was assailed in the press ; and it was they who put forward for him the ingenious excuse by which he escaped punishment. It seems that the kind-hearted pedagogue only went on flogging Loxdale so long because the boy wouldn't scream. If Loxdale had screamed he might have been "unhorsed" after a dozen cuts or so ; as it was Mr. Moss was obliged to give up from sheer weariness, and because the birch had become a mere stump in his hand. Poor man !

The abovesaid screaming stipulation would not be likely to find favour at most English public schools ; for it is ever a point of honour with boys to take their stripes without flinching. They have an ugly custom at Westminster of flogging boys with a birch on the back of the hand—an abominable thing in frosty weather, when knuckles are chapped or chill-blained. However, no boy was ever heard to howl under it ; and the utmost lengths he would go in disapproval of the castigation would be to wink to the monitor who handed the rod out of the cupboard, as a request to him to "pull the buds off." Etonians have been known to laugh at a punishment which, from being oft undergone, had lost its terrors. One who was awaiting his turn in the Sixth-form whilst a friend was being scourged, turned suddenly to the wall and burst into a loud fit of hilarity. Asked what he meant by this intempestive mirth, he pointed to the kneeling figure of his comrade still writhing on the

block, and exclaimed : " Oh, a fellow does look too absurd in that posture ! "

Manliness does, after all, appear as the chief outcome of English school-training, and it is manliness of a dogged sort, utterly devoid of sentiment. Modern boys are not callous to pain from bravado, but because it is *mauvais genre* to show feeling. They are ashamed to cry ; they do not like to be seen kissing their parents ; they are shy of alluding to their mothers, their sisters, or to anything connected with their homes except the dinners and the sports they get there. They have a dread of being called milksops, and to avoid this title will keep such a command over their emotions that they will seem to be cynical. There is very little romance in them. They scoff at ardent language as " rot," and sneer at any departure from conventionality as a breach of good taste and manners. Love of poetry, patriotism, hero-worship, are things which may stir the bosoms of individual boys, but not the boy-masses of our large schools.

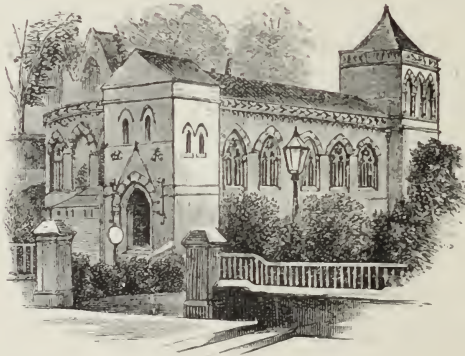
The days for these sentimentalities have gone. As the fathers teach so will the sons learn ; and it is not among the generation that has held cautiously aloof from all the great European struggles and converted " British Interests " and " British Honour " into words of mockery, that one must look for those eager, generous aspirations which in old times were wont to make the pulses of our boys beat fast.

How different this from the French schoolboy, who

cherishes the names of all the great poets, soldiers and statesmen of his country, and can always be fanned into flame by allusions to France's glory—and how different from the young German, who glows at the name of "Vaterland," and delights in singing-clubs where he learns to chorus ballads teeming with patriotism and romance of the most refined character. Not but that the young Englishman is attached to his country, too, in an undemonstrative way. But he values it chiefly because it is the only place where good cricket, boating, and sport can be had. Its supremacy is a fact which he takes coolly for granted, and he would be moved to amused contempt for anyone who doubted it. Frenchmen are guys in his eyes, and Germans snobs. That is all he knows about them, and he cares to hear no more.

One may suppose that in any times of national danger this crust—for it is no more than a crust of indifferentism—would scale off, and nobler qualities would break forth than those which we can now descry on the surface; but we are dealing with things as they are, and must perforce take note of the unemotional stolidity which has become the distinguishing feature of modern boyishness. Radley and Lancing colleges are, we believe, the only schools where a different style of thought is cultivated; but these institutions being under the rule of ritualist clergymen, the tone of them is somewhat akin to that of the Jesuits' schools on the Continent; and the intel-

lectualism inculcated there is of the gushing, hysterical sort, which often converts the boys into "shrieking" men. This is perhaps worse than the doggedness we have criticized; for your maudlin ranting Englishman, impacted with sacerdotalism and Romanish tendencies, is a fearful creature. One would like a middle term between rant and callousness; but it is doubtless difficult to find, for Englishmen are not as a nation remarkable for the tact which French call *le sentiment de la mesure*.



NEW BUILDINGS, HARROW.

V.

OXFORD UNDERGRADUATES.

THE characteristics of boys begin to shape themselves out pretty clearly at school, but the final form is given to them at the University. A boy is studious, idle, religious, flippan't, an adept at games, or a lover of bad company : he carries his proclivities with him to Oxford or Cambridge, and there they are fashioned into a decided bent. University life sometimes improves a lad's qualities, it is but seldom that it rids him of his defects. Therefore a boy who has begun to go wrong at school is pretty sure to go more wrong at college unless he pass an interval between school and college with a good private tutor—and this specific cannot be too earnestly recommended to parents who are in doubt as to the direction which their sons' characters are taking. A year's residence with a good tutor has been the saving of many a boy, who, but for it, would have gone utterly to the bad. It has enabled him to sever his connection with his companions in mischief at school, it has prepared him for the liberty of University life, and fortified him in some measure against its temptations.



Those temptations are neither few nor small ; for the moment a lad settles into his college rooms, he finds more inducements to play than to work, and he is beset by a crowd of persons who seem to be in league to draw him into extravagance.

The Oxford colleges are much of a muchness in this respect, but an exception must be allowed in favour of Balliol, for in the first place, Undergraduates are only matriculated there after a stiff examination, and in the next, they are not suffered to remain on the books if they do not work. The Balliol tutors, too, report to an Undergraduate's friends if they see him fall into bad habits ; and they do not wait to see this until the truth has been forced upon them in the

shape of an ugly scandal. If all the colleges were managed like Balliol, one would hear less of youngsters ruining their careers by early debts, indolence, and dissipation.

What old 'Varsity man does not remember the day when he was first inducted into the possession of a set of rooms looking out upon some venerable "quad." or trimly kept garden? His furniture was not in very good state, for it had done duty under several former proprietors, but custom obliged him to take it at a valuation, and he proceeded to do so, incurring a little additional bill into the bargain, for indispensable repairs. Before he had slept a night in college, he found himself in debt also for his new cap and gown, for the fuel in his grate, the lamp on his table, and for numerous parcels of groceries which his "scout" had kindly purchased. Not but that he offered to pay for the above things in ready money, but the scout informed him it was not the practice of the place. Gentlemen paid their bills at the end of the term, or, if they liked it better, when they "went down" after taking their degrees. Tradesmen did not like keeping accounts for small sums, and he—the scout—usually did all the catering for gentlemen on his staircase to save them trouble.

Perhaps young Freshman had come up to college well supplied with funds, and full of virtuous resolutions about paying for everything in cash; but the "customs" of a place are insidious tempters, and then

the prospects of being able to keep the contents of his purse as pocket money, was too alluring to be resisted. *Facile descensus*: it is easy work gliding down a hill of debt, the end of which need only be reached in three years' time. Three years; why, it is an age, and heaps of things may happen before then; but Freshman thinks that if the worst betide, *i.e.*, if he fall into debt up to the neck—he can work hard during his last year and, by taking a good degree, bribe his relatives into loosening their purse-strings.

For all this, it does rather surprise a Freshman at first to note how extremely affable University tradesmen are, and how apparently indifferent to pecuniary considerations. The tailor is not content to measure



him for one new suit, but presses upon him the necessity for being always well-dressed, and suggests that his whole wardrobe wants renewing. The hosier coaxes him into accepting many pairs of gloves, showy neck-scarves and cambric handkerchiefs. A jeweller's tout waits upon him with samples of some neat things in rings and pins, and is shocked at seeing that the watch he wears (given him by his mother) is of such poor workmanship. At the horse-dealer's he beholds groves of tame nags at his service, and may hunt for three guineas a diem, or drive tandem for half a guinea an hour, without having to pay, for the present, more than an occasional florin to the ostler. At either of the three hotels which he chooses to patronise, a clean page of the ledger is placed at his disposal, to be filled up with accounts for dinners, little suppers, or casual refreshments. The pastry-cook solicits his custom for wines; two or three tobacconists send him boxes of cigars on approval; he receives a circular from the proprietor of a billiard room, inviting him to inspect a beautiful new table, whereon the science of cannoning will be taught him by a world-renowned marker. Last, but not least, a professional money-lender has an obliging word to say to him on a pink, printed form, promising easy terms and strict secrecy.

The Freshman soon falls into the humour of these solicitations, and by the time he has been "up" two or three terms he has dropped into a blissful state of

carelessness as to the cost of things. He has adorned his rooms with handsome engravings and sporting cracks; he gives "wines" at which an immense amount of confectionery and a fair quantity of claret



are consumed; he plays cards for high stakes as he can afford to do, spending all his allowance as pocket-money, and he dresses according to the height of fashion, which he indeed helps to lead by airing garments of strange new-fangled cuts, invented specially to suit his figure—says his polite tailor. There is nothing to remind the festive youth that all the luxuries he enjoys—his fruity wines, fine flavoured cigars, broken-kneed hunters, and gay clothing, all

represent certain sums which will have to be disbursed some day. He does everything on "tick," and the authorities of his college encourage him in self-indulgence by allowing him to be supplied out of the college buttery and kitchen with beer almost unlimited, and savoury breakfasts for as many friends as he pleases to entertain.

His life is a round of amusements, wherewith learning is but scantily interspersed. Except but for five attendances a week in chapel and occasional presence at lectures, he might as well be in London for all there is to mark that he is still *in statu pupillari*. To be sure college rules oblige him to be within gates by midnight, so that the rectitude of his morals is partially guaranteed; but, if he be an open-handed fellow, he finds no great difficulty in bribing his scout to wink at night-absences from time to time. If the scout do not report him absent, there is no one else who can ascertain the fact, for no precautions exist in the way of roll-calls. Besides, an Undergraduate is not denied a couple of days' leave now and then, if he can imagine some good excuse for asking it.

All this makes the road to ruin quite straight; but the longest road has a turning, and sometimes the Undergraduate spendthrift is pulled up short by a number of bills presented before he expected them. Let one of those smooth University tradesmen but suspect that a lad is outrunning his tether, and con-

tracting more debts than his friends will be willing to pay, and he will suddenly send in his account with an apology about the badness of the times, but an assurance that unless he gets settled with he shall be obliged to take out a summons in the Vice-Chancellor's court. This precious court has been instituted for the recovery of debts by University authorities, whose business it should have been to prevent an Undergraduate from getting into debt at all. Minority is no bar to an action in it. When an Undergraduate has received a summons, which costs £5 8s. 6*d.*, he must appear in person before the Vice-Chancellor, or some deputed Doctor of Divinity, who is flanked by an acute solicitor, and some such dialogue as this takes place :

“Here is a long bill for wines—sherry, port, and several dozens of champagne. Why don't you pay instead of coming here ?”

“I'll pay, sir, in time ; but I understood I was to have credit until I took my degree.”

“You will never take your degree if you drink so much. My order is that you pay by this day week.”

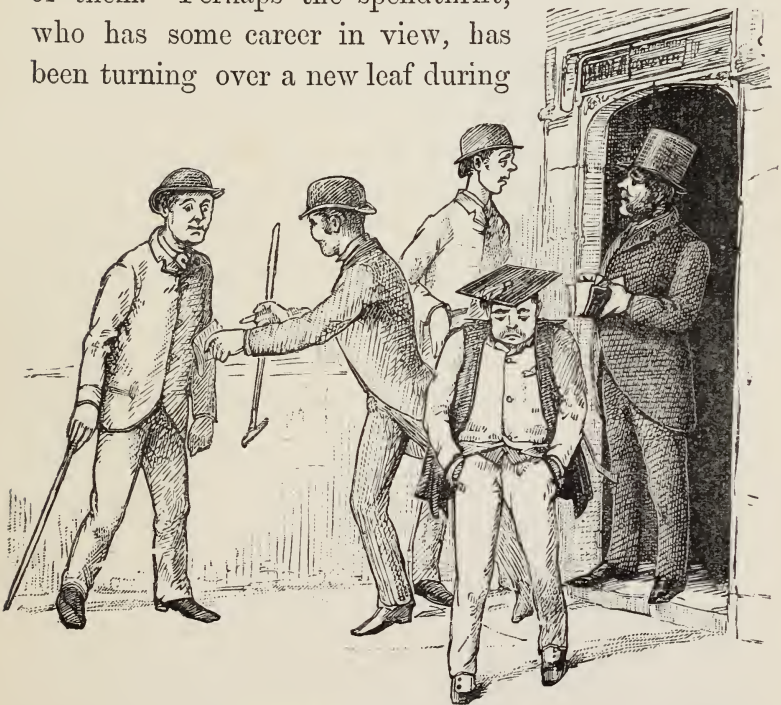
“Please sir, give me a little longer : I shall not be able to get a remittance from home within that time.”

“Well, then, take a fortnight, but not a day more ; if you have not paid then I shall issue an order of distraint.”

It is useless to protest. Once a tradesman has issued a summons, numbers of others follow suit, and the juvenile debtor must either contrive to pay up to

the last farthing, with costs of process besides, or his goods are seized to be sold by auction. But as this fiscal measure involves disgrace, academical penalties are added to it, and the spendthrift is ordered to take his name off the books of his college, in other words, he is expelled the University.

More often, though, the crash does not come till degree day, for the tradesmen know that they have a stronger hold upon a man, who, having spent his three years at a University does not want to lose the fruits of them. Perhaps the spendthrift, who has some career in view, has been turning over a new leaf during



“TESTAMUR, SIR?”—“NO, SIR.”

his last terms, and has slaved hard to get his *testamur*. He gets it and is qualified for his degree ; but then comes the reckoning of his liabilities, and he discovers these to be so very much heavier than he had calculated, that all idea of appealing to his friends with a statement of the whole truth is laid aside. At most he ventures to write home for a fifth part of what he really owes, and he tries to effect a composition. But his creditors will hear of no arrangement. Their alternative is plain. If they are not satisfied in full they will “pluck” their debtor—which means that when the debtor’s name has been read out in the “Schools” among the candidates for the bachelor’s hood, and when the proctor walks up and down muttering the formula *Placet ne?* they will record their *non placet* by plucking at this official’s gown.

This may be done three times without the plucker being called upon for his reasons, but the fourth time of plucking, explanations have to be given before the Vice-Chancellor, and then the candidate is apprised that he will be permanently estopped from applying for his hood, until he can exhibit receipts from all his creditors. Pluckings have become rare because debtors avoid applying for their hoods out of fear of them ; and in general, a career of university extravagance ends, either in the spendthrift going out into the world with the satisfaction of having wasted three years to no purpose, or he has to bleed and pinch his friends, till by some excruciating effort they can

muster enough to indemnify the harpies who have been suffered to prey upon him.

A good deal has been written about college debts, but tutors and Heads of Houses have never seen fit to look upon Undergraduates as legal infants who have a claim to the protection of their masters. Debt and all its attendant miseries would easily be checked at the Universities, if the governing bodies abolished the Vice-Chancellor's court and "discommoned" the tradesmen who were proved to have given credit to Undergraduates. This reform is so simple—so necessary—the denial of it is so absurd, that one is amazed at having to suggest it; but it would seem that the main obstacle to it lies in the fact that University authorities—or at least some of them—derive a solid profit from the irregularities of tradesmen. They, too,—the Dons—take long credit for necessaries and luxuries, but in consideration of the help they afford in making Undergraduates pay, their own bills are moderate and never dunned for.

This is an ugly aspect of the question, but a still uglier one was revealed a few years ago by a fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, the Reverend John Vavasour Durell, at present rector of Fulbourne, Cambridgeshire. This gentleman did the good service of disclosing that certain tutors were in the habit of summoning their pupils who had got into debt, and ordering them to pay within a given time, not straight to the creditors, but to themselves—the tutors. Having got the

money, the tutors did not immediately hand it over to the tradesmen, but kept it a year or two in hand, deriving interest therefrom, with the tradesmen's consent, more or less spontaneous. Naturally these revelations so shocked the Fellows of St. John's, that they hastened to present Mr. Durell with a valuable living, lest mayhap, by residing in college, he might have laid his eye on some other odd secrets.



VI.

UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE.

THERE is much talk of University Reform, but the first of all reforms will be to convince such men as Dr. Liddell, Dean of Christ Church, that Universities are maintained for purposes of study, and that if an Undergraduate will not work, he had best be sent home to his parents, that he may not squander their money and corrupt others by his example. We mention Dr. Liddell because he is the worst offender in the matter of allowing boys to go wrong. With his virtues as a Christian, his attainments as a scholar, or his attractions as a Society divine, we have nothing to do. He is the Head of a great college, where extravagance and idleness are proverbially rife and have been for years. He thinks he is not bound to remedy this state of things. He should be taught that he is wrong.

So should others of his fellow-Heads, who are animated with the same preposterous idea as to the limitation of their functions within a small ornamental sphere. They think that so long as they strut pompously to the meetings of the Hebdomadal council, give their votes to job college livings, and make a

defiant stand against innovation of every sort, they have discharged their duty. Yet it is only within the present century, in proportion as the Universities waxed richer and richer, that these notions of pococuranteism in high places have been suffered to pass current. The statutes do not provide that the Head of a college shall be a mere Olympian lay figure. On the contrary he is strictly charged to care for the morals and manners of the Undergraduates. In the quaint old Latin charters drawn up by founders who well knew how boys ought to be managed, he is required to stand towards the younger members of his college *in loco parentis*, and not to tolerate the "devil's vice" of idleness.

Dr. Liddell might urge that he would find it heavy work, to act as father towards more than three hundred Undergraduates, all the more so as he has ecclesiastical functions, being Dean of Oxford Cathedral as well as principal of Christ Church. This is true, and it affords a strong argument for separating the Deanery of Oxford from the Headship of Christ Church. A man in Dr. Liddell's position should be able to give all his time to his college, and should be assisted by energetic subordinates, over whose activity he should exercise a never-failing control. But at all events Dr. Liddell's plea for inaction cannot by any possibility be urged by the Heads of smaller colleges and halls, such as Corpus, Wadham, St. Mary's, &c., yet at these places the Heads feel it incumbent upon



UNDERGRADUATES CHEVIED BY A PROCTOR AND HIS BULL DOGS.

their dignity to hold aloof from the Undergraduates—in other words not to do the work which they are paid—and paid too well—to do.

There is an idea abroad that discipline is maintained in the University by the proctors. Two of these gentlemen are appointed yearly at a salary of £500. They wear cloth gowns with velvet sleeves, and dash about the streets of an evening escorted by three or four men, known as “bulldogs,” and whose function it is to chevvy an Undergraduate who may be caught transgressing any rule, and who may be tempted to bolt when accosted. As a fact the sins which proctors punish are the being out without cap and gown, smoking in the High Street, and playing



cloth gowns with velvet



WITHOUT CAP AND GOWN.

billiards after 9 p.m. They may be observed now and

then tackling some unfortunate Undergraduate, whose name and college they take down and whom they fine 5s., 10s., or £1 as the case may be. But, O irony of things! the Undergraduate who is fined for puffing a cigar in the "High" may smoke like a chimney in all



A CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNIVERSITY CHEST.

the other streets or within his own college, and though it be an offence in him to be abroad without his academics after dark, he may ride or saunter about in all sorts of fantastic garments, hunting-pinks, loud shooting coats, or boating flannels, during the day.



BILLIARDS AFTER 9 P.M.

This is Oxford all over—a great pretence of doing what is not done, and charging heavily for the farce. As for the notion that proctors serve to keep improper female characters off the streets, it may be remarked that this is well managed by the detectives of the University and Town police, and that it needs no clergyman at £500 a year, to say nothing of a brace of bull-dogs at £80 a-piece, to assist in the work. If the bull-dogs wish to be really useful, let them keep an eye on Bicester and Abingdon, where fair members of the London dramatic corps are often entertained by young noblemen of Christ Church; let them penetrate into

the slums of dog-fanciers, where cock fighting and badger drawing are freely practised, or join with the college authorities in putting down the unlimited loo and "nap" which goes on in the rooms of Canterbury Quad and Peckwater, or in the studies of Merton and Magdalen.

Recently it has been shrewdly pointed out by a Cambridge graduate, the Rev. A. W. Towy of St. John's, who drew his facts from a comparison between more than twenty home and foreign Universities, that the more a University is endowed the higher is the cost of living there. Endowments have not even the advantage of procuring tuition cheap, for tuition is three times dearer at Oxford and Cambridge than at Edinburgh, Göttingen, and Heidelberg, without being better. High salaries induce greed among the professors, indolence among the Masters and Heads; and extravagance being practised by the authorities the impulse of it is carried through all the ranks of the University hierarchy, so that every official down to the scouts is extortionate.

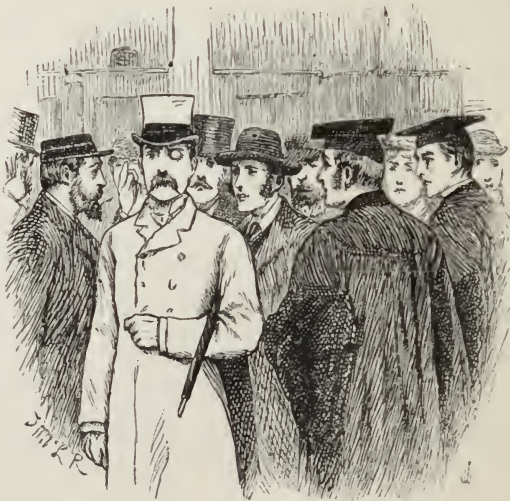
There is no earthly reason why an Undergraduate at Oxford and Cambridge should not be able to live and learn comfortably on £100 a year; but he cannot make two ends meet on twice that sum, although he resides barely six months in college, and no wonder, when we hear of the fortunes amassed by the cooks and butlers of the large colleges, like Christ Church, Trinity, and St. John's, and the very snug competencies

secured by the same functionaries at the smaller foundations. Undergraduates pay for everything too dearly. Their dinners are costly and often bad; the colleges which sell them beer, butter, cheese, &c., retail these things at a greater profit than the tradesmen of the town would dare charge; and the fees for room-rents, tuition, firing, &c., are always increasing out of proportion to the costs of living outside.

All these abuses cry aloud for the pruning-hook, and while we are on this subject, it may be as well to observe that the long vacation, which throws Undergraduates on their own resources during four months, from June till October, is a relic of old times which has no more its *raison d'être*. It was originally established in order that the Undergraduates, who were then mostly the sons of yeomen, might go home to take part in the field labours of summer, haymaking, harvesting, and so forth; and its maintenance was advocated in later times, before the railway era, because it was said that the Dons could improve their minds during four months by travel. But a great deal of travelling can be done nowadays in six weeks or two months, and if the long vacation were reduced within these reasonable limits, the addition of two or three months yearly to the scholastic terms might open up the way to conferring degrees at the end of two years instead of three, as now.

We are perfectly aware that it is frequently contended that the long vacation enables Under-

graduates of a studious turn to do more reading than they could manage in college ; but is not this the most sarcastic reflection upon University management ? And surely it is nonsense to send men away to read at home, when the University towns offer such facilities for study in the shape of libraries, &c., as are not to be found elsewhere. The expense entailed upon parents by these long vacations is also a point which cannot be left out of account, for, as things go, an Undergraduate's total expenses very seldom fall short of £400 a year, even when he does not get into debt ; and it is quite absurd that a boy's education should be rendered so onerous.



VII.

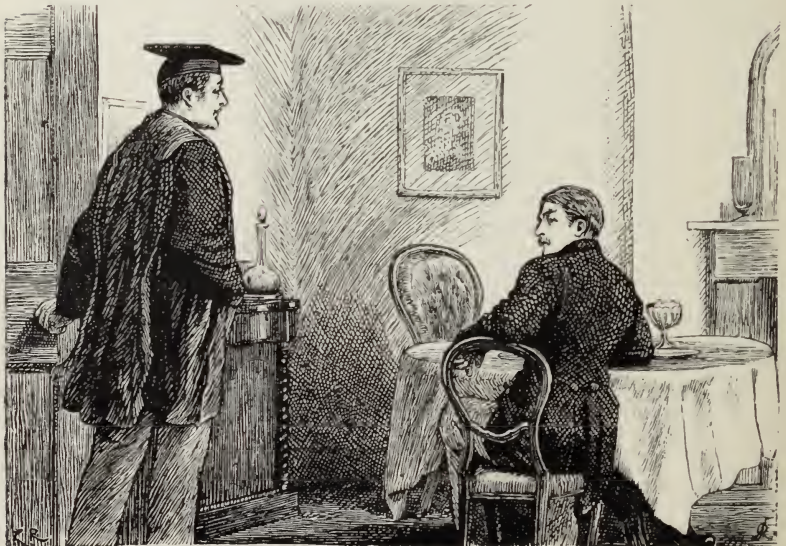
SPORTING AND ATHLETIC UNDERGRADUATES.

THIS said, and taking it for granted that the Universities are places where lads need not work unless they please, it may be asked, how those who do not work dispose of their time? All do not abandon themselves to the dissipation of drink, cards, and billiards. There are some who hunt assiduously, others boat or play cricket, others are inveterate players of rackets, runners and gymnasts. It is good that physical training should keep pace with intellectual, and there would be nothing to urge against all the above amusements, if they were followed as recreations instead of being made the exclusive objects of those who pursue them.

The Sporting Undergraduate mostly hails from Christ Church. He is a nobleman, or the son of a wealthy father. He keeps a hunter or two at Pollit's, and has four or five first-rate packs in the neighbourhood to dispute his patronage. He may be a keen Nimrod, and attend five meets a week, but in general he is more moderate and confines himself to two. On hunting mornings he does not go to chapel. He is ready equipped in "tops" and pink coat by eight, and,

after a breakfast of steaks, with other men who may be going to join him, he sallies out and mounts the hack waiting at the college gates. The Head of the college may be walking out at the same moment, and the pair exchange bows, but it never occurs to the Head to stop and enquire whether the youth who is so flagrantly infringing the statute as to academical garments has not some lectures demanding his presence that day.

The Sporting man is chary of fatiguing himself with lectures. Riding to the meet at Woodstock or Abingdon at a leisurely amble, he looks as if he were complete master of his time and does not think of shortening his day by any care for book-work. He returns at four o'clock, may be, after a hard run ; puts himself into easy clothes, and finds just time for a



glass of something stimulating, with a cigar and a chat with pals who stroll into his rooms to talk over the day's events, before going to "Hall." After Hall dinner he is pretty sure to have an invitation to "wine" somewhere, and later in the evening he repairs to the rooms of some chum for a quiet rubber at sixpence the point, or a go of loo which winds up with a supper of broiled bones and mulled claret. The good riders are necessarily pretty abstemious and keep regular hours; those who hunt only for the purpose of airing their pink coats, and whose ultimate fate it is to be brought back to college some day on a hurdle, with a broken collar bone—these hold the loo, the mulled wines, and the late hours, followed as a matter of course by racking head-aches on the morrow, to be inseparable adjuncts to fox-chasing.

In the off-days the Sporting Undergrad often indulges in a day's pigeon shooting at Iffley; or he drives out to Bicester or Wallingford in a tandem, or takes a little relaxation at billiards. He does not show much at cock-fights or badger-drawings—it is only the "doggie Undergrads" who do that. He loafs a good deal about the stable yards at Simmons' or Pollit's examining the points of neat "tits" that are to be had dirt cheap at a hundred and twenty guineas and upwards. He attends Birmingham horse shows; sales of yearlings within railway reach; and seldom misses an important race provided he can get to it and come back to college by midnight. On Derby day chapel

and "Halls" being generally compulsory at Oxford in order that Undergraduates may not betake themselves to Epsom, the sportsman will often put in an *ager*—that is, pretend to be unwell—and risk rustication by slipping up to town whilst he is supposed to be lying ill in bed. But he is seldom found out, for being generous with his small coin, scouts and college porters are all in league to wink at his delinquencies. It was a Christ Church sportsman who, having asked for leave on the eve of the national equine festival, was made to promise by a simple-minded Don that he would not attend the race "to be held to-morrow at *Derby*." The sportsman readily enough promised that he would not go to *Derby*, but said nothing whatever about keeping away from Dorling's Grand Stand on Epsom downs.

In the summer term the Sporting Undergraduate often developes into a cricketer; but if downright horsey, he takes to cricket as a mere pastime, and seldom devotes himself to it with energy enough to get chosen for the University eleven. The Cricketing Undergraduate thinks of little else but bats and balls, and is a professional in all except the fact that he does not make money by his prowess. No sooner has the sun of March begun to shine upon the Christ Church meadows, and upon Fenner's ground at Cambridge, than he is out trying how the ground feels after the winter floods. He is seriously concerned about its

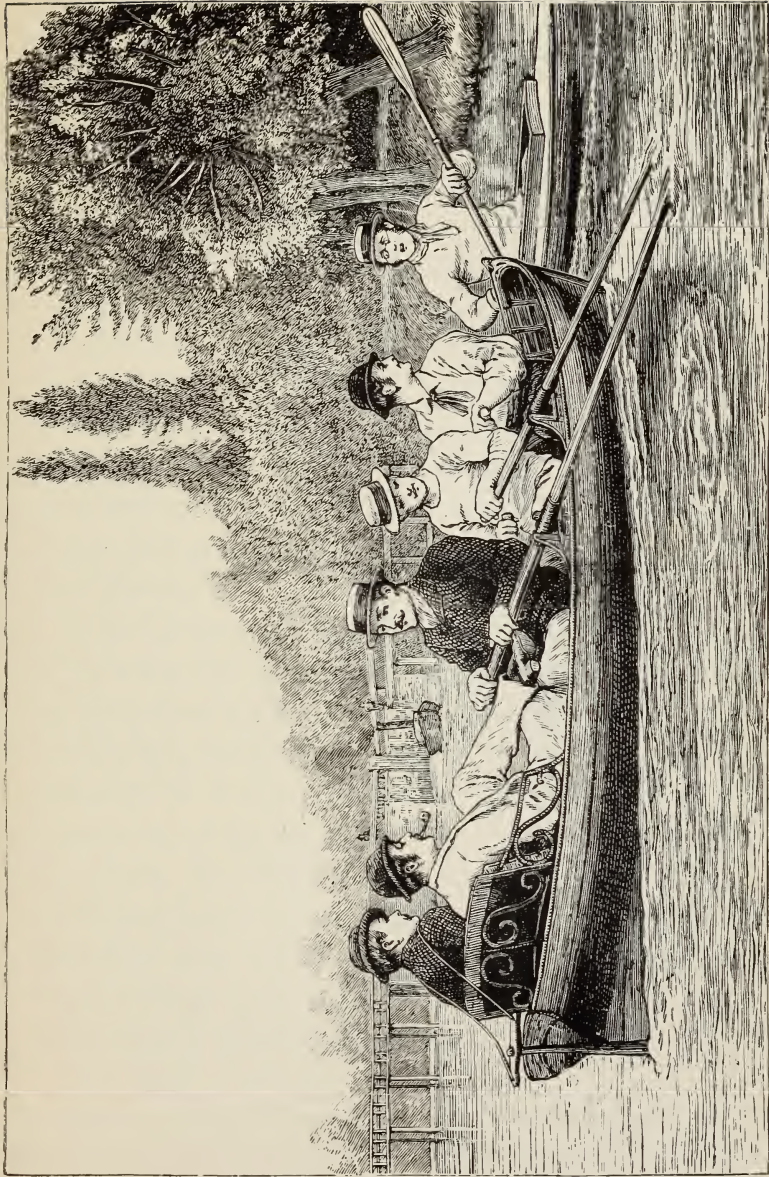
deadness, or rejoices in its liveliness, according to circumstances. He gets a professional to bowl to him, and practises earnestly for hours to remedy the points in which he feels weakest. If he be a bowler, he sets up a single stump and asks a good blocker to defend it, practising pitch, break and spin, till he hits upon some knack of commanding twisters and shooters at will.

Before Easter he is busy trying the styles of the different recruits who have come up to the 'Varsity since last October term. He is soon familiar with the pick of what Eton, Harrow, and Rugby have set up, and can estimate the probable strength of his University in the annual match at Lord's. After Easter, when the matches begin, he is in constant employment. He has a wondrous stock of flannel shirts, and gaily coloured caps denoting the different clubs to which he belongs; and his list of engagements comprises matches that will take place far in the vacation, even unto the end of the cricket season. He takes in *Bell's Life*, which is a faithful chronicler of University cricket, and his one thought, waking and sleeping, is how to keep up his average of runs. His talk at Hall, in his rooms of an evening, and on Sundays during his walks, is all about the scores he has made, and the confounded ill-luck which lost him his bails on such and such a memorable occasion. He is a partisan of the new or the old school in cricket, and either advocates "pad with the leather, and slogs with the

willow," or he declares that the new style of greased-lightning balls, and furious swiping are destructive of true cricket. His ambition is to play for his college, then to be selected in the 'Varsity team, and if he compasses the last honour, he is drawn into a vortex of cricket which absorbs him body and soul. He courts occasions for meeting the best professionals, and getting inured to their balls ; and whenever he can snatch a spare day he goes off to Lord's or the Oval to witness what may be doing there.

When the summer term is over, and he has distinguished himself on behalf of his many college clubs, his work is by no means ended, for first there is the Inter-University match, and then a succession of county and mixed matches which will keep him travelling all over the kingdom till October. He belongs to I Zingari, the M. C. C., the Ramblers, and the Peripatetics. He is invited to play at Canterbury during the annual "week ;" perhaps he gets nominated for the crowning distinction of representing the Gentlemen against the Players. He crosses over to Ireland to play a match in Phoenix Park, then rushes back for an engagement at Aldershot, and is off to Halifax the week after for an encounter between Yorkshire and All-England.

By dint of rambling about to cricket fields, his face becomes known wherever six stumps are pitched for purposes of first-class cricket ; and he on his side knows hundreds of men with whom matches have



BOATING UNDERGRADUATES ON THE ISIS.

brought him into contact. A good cricketer's life is one of great expense, but if he has the means to carry it on for a few years, it brings much social pleasantness. In country hall and town house the cricketer is welcome. He is hand in glove with so many eligible persons, that, although his connections may be not much to boast of, and his pecuniary circumstances slender, he becomes eligible himself, and generally makes a good marriage. Or if he marry for pure love, and have to close his cricketing career in consequence of being unable to afford continuing it, the prestige of his past honours and the friendships it has secured him, ensure his being helped forward in any profession he may choose.

If he turns parson he may count on getting a living. If he enter the bar something good is found for him in the colonies, or in the civil service; or he gets installed in some secretaryship to a club or hotel company, or to some joint-stock concern for promoting aquariums, rinks, or what not. The Lubbocks and Lytteltons, the Walkers and Lucases, who are great cricketing families, are influential families too, and cricketers who are on close terms with them are never suffered to go begging for such plums as private influence can obtain in England.

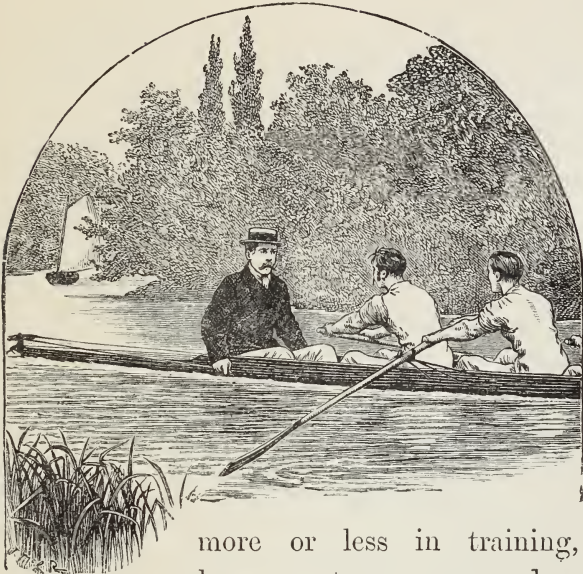
The University boating man is a very different person from the cricketer, his life being neither so enjoyable, nor his ultimate destiny so secure. All Under-



graduates boat more or less ; but the term of “ boating man ” does not apply to those who merely paddle about the Isis or Cam in skiffs or canoes, and whose highest ambition it is to get into their college “ torpids.” The boating man proper must be in the crack boat of his college, and aspire to row in the ‘Varsity race at Putney. He is a fellow of thews and sinews, whose chief dread it is to get fat, and who has himself periodically weighed to see how much flesh he has gained or lost within the last month. He is always



AT THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE BOAT RACE.



more or less in training, and eschews pastry, sugar, and messes of all descriptions from an idea that sound tissue can





only be built up on meat and a short allowance of liquids.

If he gets into the 'Varsity team, he becomes at once an important personage. For weeks his name and weight are printed every day in the papers. His qualities of form and wind—his reach, recovery, and style in feathering are exhaustively discussed in the journals, from *The Times* to *The Field*. He has to take minute precautions about his health, and lives in a state of semi-monastic discipline lest, by breaking down just before the race, he should jeopardize the laurels of his University. He often overtrains himself, and has alarming eruptions of boils in critical places.



Naturally, the necessities of training oblige the boating man to lay all work aside. He would think it bad for his health to sit up for an evening and read Homer. From Christmas to the end of the Easter term all the resources in him are directed towards preparing for the race at Putney; and it is only when

this world-famed event has come off that he can settle into the ordinary existence of human beings. Even then, however, the true boating man does not cease from training his muscles; for he has the summer races to think of, and possibly he may compete for the diamond sculls or the pair-oar goblets at Henley Regatta, so that his mind is full of these various concerns until June.

In due time the boating man becomes president of his University or college boat-club, and the duties of this exalted function make a heavy demand on his time and energies. He has to coach crews of



freshmen, at times running along the towing path, or riding upon a cob. He has to give private tuition in rowing to pairs, whom he takes out in "tubs." He is always advising, encouraging, rebuking,—demonstrating the beauties of a long reach or of a quick, snatching stroke, according as his fancy may lie. The career of the boating man is generally limited by the fact that a man cannot keep perpetually within rowing weight. Once that he exceeds 12 stone 7 lbs., he is deemed a trifle heavy, and if in his efforts to keep down to rowing weight he continues to over-train himself, the consequence may be a shattered constitution.

This being so, the boating man who has sense as well as muscle resigns his aquatic honours during his last year at college, in order that he may read for his degree. If he does not he is pretty sure to be "ploughed" in the final Schools, and he has no such consolation as the cricketer in being able to think that his proficiency with the oar will stand him instead of learning all his life through. The boating man's glory vanishes out of remembrance as soon as he has run to flesh and retired from the river, unless, indeed, he have been stroke of the 'Varsity crew in an eventful year, in which case he stands a chance of preserving his *kudos* all his life through.

Taking him altogether the boating man is generally a good fellow—though slow-witted and apt to become lazy when fat, owing to the loafing habits he

has contracted in idling about boat-houses. In any case his training teaches him lessons in steadiness and sobriety which he seldom forgets, so that his after-life is one of respectability. The instances of hard-rowing 'Varsity men who have gone to the bad are very few indeed.



RUNNING THE GAUNTLET—HENLEY FORM.

VIII.

READING AND RELIGIOUS UNDERGRADUATES.

WE have talked thus far of playing Undergraduates because they form the majority at our so-called seats of learning ; but every college has its studious men, its religious men, and its discussive men, who go in for the cultivation of fads, in ethics, politics, or art.

The Studious Undergraduate who toils to obtain a first class in honours or a high wranglership is often a surprising young man, whose power of work must be witnessed to be realized. He lives in libraries and lecture-rooms, and of an evening when he works in his own room one may be sure to find his "oak sported" with a view to barring out idlers. The prizes of University learning are so numerous that once an Undergraduate has set them before him their fascination lures him on to extraordinary feats of cramming. In addition to the honours of first classes, there are college prizes to be won, and university prizes, and scholarships, and finally a fellowship, which means £200 or £300 a year, with oftentimes a tutorship annexed, and, in any case, an excellent start in life.

The lads of genius who can afford to face the

examinations coolly, without much preparatory work, are of course few ; and usually it may be said that hard University reading means overwork. The examination papers are too hard, or at least they are so



STUDYING EXAM. PAPERS.

ingeniously searching in their questions that candidates have to read up an immense amount of rubbish to prepare for them. Your hard-reading man frequently wears out his sight, and has to don premature spectacles. His shoulders stoop. His cheeks are pale for want of exercise, and his head often splits with pain owing to a delightful habit he has of wrapping his brow in wet towels, and drinking powerfully strong coffee of an evening to drive sleep away. By dint of such tricks many a promising candidate has come up to the Schools in the condition of a racer lame at the post. He has learned so much that the receptacles of his brain have burst under the pressure of facts and left him semi-idiotic.



“PASSED.”



GOING UP FOR EXAM.

But the reading-man who can come to the Schools in prime condition has splendid moments of triumph in store. There are few sensations equal to the joy of obtaining that coveted "first-class," which makes a man a conspicuous object for life, and all the more so as to many reading-men a "first-class" means all sorts of valuable pecuniary things in the future. Think of the man whose friends have pinched themselves to send him to the University, whose mother has built fond hopes on him, whose sisters are looking into the newspaper every morning to find his name in the honours list! It can be no indifferent thing to such a one, whether he be placed in the first class or the second. He is to be the bread-winner of his house, perhaps its glory. If he gets only a "second-class" there will cling to him all his life the recollection of having tried for a great thing and failed in it. He will be out of the

running for professional prizes. No hopes of a fellowship or college tutorship ; no chance of obtaining a post as master in one of the great public schools. The world pooh-poohs second-class honours, and it were better for some men to be "ploughed" than to get them, for if "ploughed" they would have the opportunity of making a fresh attempt later. But the semi-stigma of a "second-class" once got by a struggling man is ineffaceable.

A candidate for honours seldom has the nerve to go in person and hear the list read out. He sends a friend and remains nervous in his rooms till the result is brought him. At Cambridge, the list is read out in the Senate House, before a great mob of noisy Undergraduates at nine in the morning ; at Oxford it is given out without any ceremony late in the afternoon, by a servant who stands behind the closed gate of the Schools. It is touching enough sometimes to see a younger brother waiting to hear how his elder has fared—cheers greet some of the popular names, others excite exclamations of wonder—commonly the "dark hesses ;" these who have kept their coaching a secret : but the majority are unknown except to a familiar few. When a youngster raises a shrill shout at the mention of his brother's name, he is often solitary in bestowing this ovation ; but see how he runs when he has caught the triumphal tidings ! Down the streets with his gown flying behind, and the tassel of his cap dancing, through his college gates, up



“ PLOUGHED.”

the stone stairs, till he breaks into the room where the weakly short sighted scholar, is waiting with a flush on both cheeks to learn the news that will make or mar him.

No—there is nothing equal to these studious victories, which throw open the portals to such rosy hopes. For several days after the class list has been issued, the “first-class” man, or the High wrangler, is unnerved by pleasurable excitement. He has telegraphed to his friends; he receives their gushing replies; his tutor is proud of him; men with whom he had never exchanged a word, shake his hand and offer their congratulations, and he begins to perceive—if he never knew it before—how kind the world is to successful men. We say nothing special of the man who comes out Senior Wrangler at Cambridge, or gets a “double-first” in Classics and Natural Sciences at Oxford. These exceptionally gifted beings have mostly given such early promises of talent, that their final triumph takes nobody—not even themselves—by surprise.

What shall we write now about that respectable, but really most solemn creature, the Religious Undergraduate? In these days of Ritualism and Romanist revivals it is natural that sacerdotal zeal should have spread to the younger members of the Universities; and among the future candidates for Orders there are several pious sects who hold private meetings for the

sake of discussing the burning religious questions of the day. The religious Undergraduate is almost invariably a Ritualist who has affinities with the Holy Cross Society. He wears an iron cross on his watch-chain. He is regular in his attendance at college chapels, but thinks the service performed there, indecorous and "contrary to law" because it is not solemnized in accordance with the rubric which sets forth that, "such ceremonies and vestments shall be adopted as were in use in the 2nd year of the reign of King Edward VI." This means chasubles, candles, incense, eastward position, and what not. It never occurs to the Religious Undergraduate that the mania for ecclesiastical millinery, and altar toys, is perilous to the church of which he professes to be a member, for in truth he does not care about the Church as a State establishment, though he is very keen in arguing about its endowments.

He and his friends subscribe to defray the expenses of Ritualist priests in trouble with the law courts. They send letters of sympathy to Mr. Tooth, and bad Latin verses to Mr. Bennet. They fast on Fridays and the Vigils of Saints, taking care that everybody shall know of it. In their private meetings they mumble monkish prayers in obsolete Latin, and are said by their profaner brethren to scourge each other humbly, but firmly, on the Black-letter days. They are abhorred by the tutors, who see in their fanaticism, a reflection upon the religious torpor which prevails in

higher University circles; but they are on good terms with some one or other among the University preachers, a fanatic like themselves, who encourages their antics, and looks upon them as disciples. Nothing is more doleful than to hear a number of Ritualist Undergraduates singing a canticle in a college room with "oak sported," for they swear by Gregorian chaunts, devoid of melody, and their performance sounds like the plaintive howling of black dogs on a windy night.

The young Ritualist seldom takes a good degree, for he is too much engrossed in controversial literature to prepare for his examinations properly. He delights in unclean manuals for auricular confession; he fills himself with a subtle pruriency by grovelling in all the ancient popish books which treat of the relations of priests with women. He makes up his mind never to marry, and spends part of his vacation in "retreats" at Ritualist monasteries, where he is fed on oatmeal and salt fish, which makes him lean and fiercely disputant. When the Ritualist youngster has taken his degree and been admitted to Orders, one soon finds him prowling round an astonished parish, in a cloth cassock and a "Gloucester" hat. From being merely ignorant and blatant, he has become truculent and vulgar, and tortuous in an argument as a Jesuit.

He defies his bishop, an easy man who beseeches him to hold his peace—and, professing to have the law on his side, he grows so bumptious that he has to

be stripped of his curacy—upon which he shrieks that he is persecuted, and slavers his childish, venomous prose all over the columns of that sweet, Christian organ, the *Church Times*. One can never see a young Ritualist without reflecting how much good a sound birching would have done him. But since Milton was whipped on the buttery hatch at Christ's College, Cambridge, this mode of doctoring Undergraduate conceit has been discarded: and it is no longer possible to apply the wholesome maxim: "Scourge the Ritualist whilst he is young, and cease not for his crying."

The Discussive Undergraduate, to call him by an invented name, is neither studious nor religious, but an active politician, and a busy speaker at the Union Debates. These debates are held once a week in a building which is used at ordinary times as a club. Both Universities have one, and the discussions held there afford a pretty good training in public oratory, though it may be remarked that the speakers are subjected to less chaff and unruly rudeness than one sees in the House of Commons. The Discussive Undergrad is often a fine fellow with a good many generous ideas. He is jocular or enthusiastic, a critic of half-hearted legislation or a denouncer of England's nerveless foreign policy; or if social questions be his *forte*, he has often wonderfully bold systems to recommend, which are not the less attractive from being impracticable. But of course this sort of

youngster occasionally talks sad twaddle, especially if he dub himself a free-thinker and take to airing the sophistries of foreign pagans and the political crotchets of French revolutionists.

The Discussive Undergraduate does not only shine at the Union's debates; he comes out strong in the common rooms (combination rooms at Cambridge) where he has a smaller but more lively and appreciative audience. Over claret, biscuits, and coffee he may start what themes he pleases without being called to order and the wordy wrangles which he provokes are carried on with spirit and gusto for hours. But it is all up with an Undergraduate who lacks temper and tact, for his weak points are soon found out in these common rooms and if he once establishes himself as a bore who has a hobby and cannot be got off it, he will cause his audience to melt or his mouth will be closed by a motion interdicting the intrusion of the particular topic which he may have at heart.

Rugbeians with their gushing but pedantic attainments, and their boisterous Liberal-Christianism are more shunned in the common rooms than other men, for it is difficult to silence them, and they talk of their school as if it were the world's axis: nor are they better liked because few can bandy logic with them. Etonians get on more smoothly, but occasionally an Undergraduate who was no great shakes at Eton either in games or lessons, will startle his old school-

fellows by blossoming out into a discussive prig of the finest quality affecting to speak as if his opinions were those of all Eton, or else if he be radically inclined, abusing his old school with a bitterness which causes a hubbub at the Eton club. Both Universities have an Eton club, and one of Harrovians too, but at these places there is no room for disputation, the institutions being merely of a social and festive character.

There are Undergraduates who write verses and try their hands at journalism in those sheets which spring up from time to time under the auspices of University publishers, and are given out as "conducted by Undergraduates." The Literary Oxonian or Cantab is, however, scarcely a type, for at times he is altogether extinct, and at others he flourishes with such vigour as to be easily distinguished as a man who will shortly make his mark in literature. In the latter case his effusions are pretty sure to be good, but in any case they deserve encouragement, for an Undergraduate cultivating literature is a young man doing the right thing in the right place. Many excellent things in the way of satire, odes, epigrams, parodies of famous poems or political speeches are written from time to time in Oxford and Cambridge, and it is rather to be regretted that these productions are not centralised in a well established magazine instead of being scattered in the pages of journals which have but an ephemeral existence.

The poet Undergraduate competes for the verse prizes at his University, and at Oxford the winners have to read out their compositions in public at the Sheldonian Theatre during Commemoration. This is a trying ordeal to the man who has committed the Latin ode on Heliogabalus or the Greek Iambics on the fall of Troy. The galleries shout to him to speak up: he screams, his voice cracks, the Doctors look bored, the ladies amused, the Masters of Arts on the floor of the House whisper and smile, and the riot of the Undergraduates grows faster and louder till not a line can be heard of the many that rise in gulps from the pulpit where the prize winner is perched. The English Verse Prizeman gets a better reception if his lines rhyme and if he have not disdained to introduce a stanza or two of comical lines. *A propos* of Commemoration it must be noted that the unseemly tumult of yahooism which used to disgrace this yearly festival has been abolished by the simple expedient of mixing ladies with Undergraduates in the Sheldonian galleries. The uproar now does not transcend the limits of good fun.

With the Literary Undergraduate we exhaust our varieties of University men unhooded. In conclusion we must repeat our belief that Oxford and Cambridge, although they have their good points, their advantages, their claims to reverence on account of the few brilliant scholars they produce, are nevertheless not at all what they might be. They are not universal, for it is only

the affluent classes who can afford to send their sons there, and they are but in a limited degree seats of learning, for the majority of those who go there learn nothing—at least nothing worth learning, unless it be experience, which they purchase too dear. The day may be far distant, or it may be near, when both Universities will undergo a searching reform, but until that day comes Oxford and Cambridge will deserve to be described as places where hundreds of boys waste their time, and where some few ruin themselves irremediably with the permission of learned and devout men, their spiritual teachers, pastors, and masters.



END OF VOL. I.



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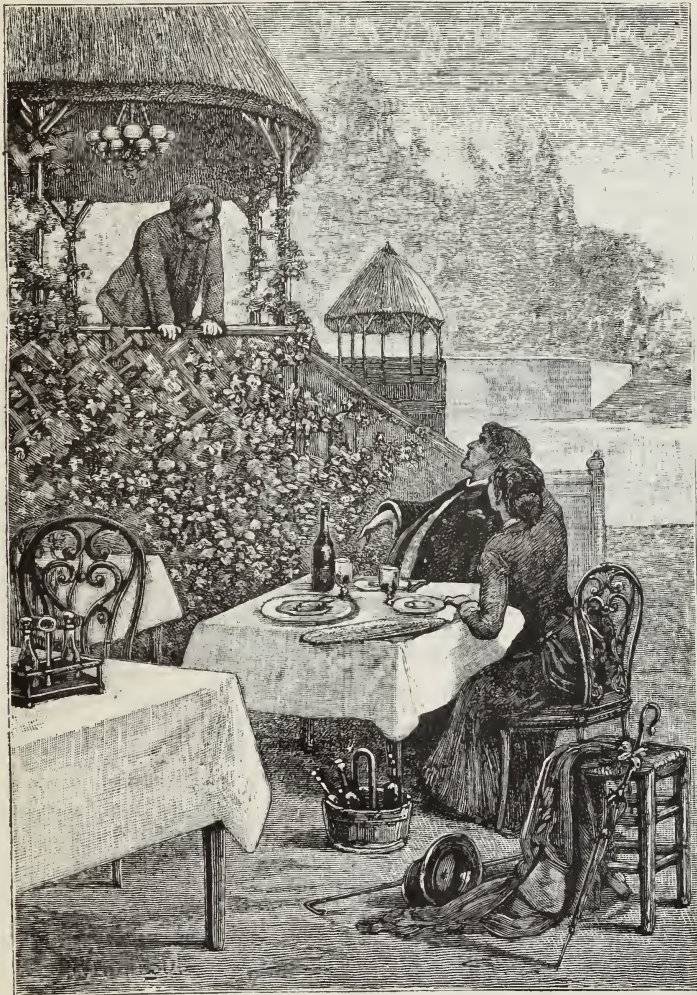
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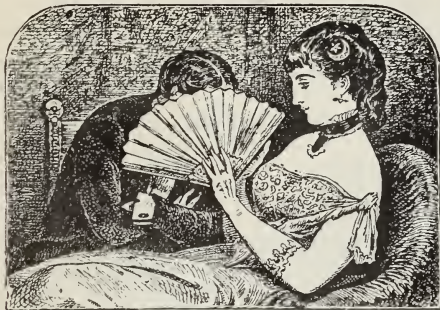
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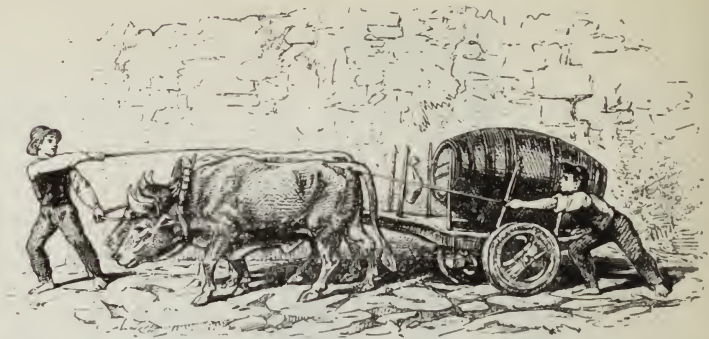
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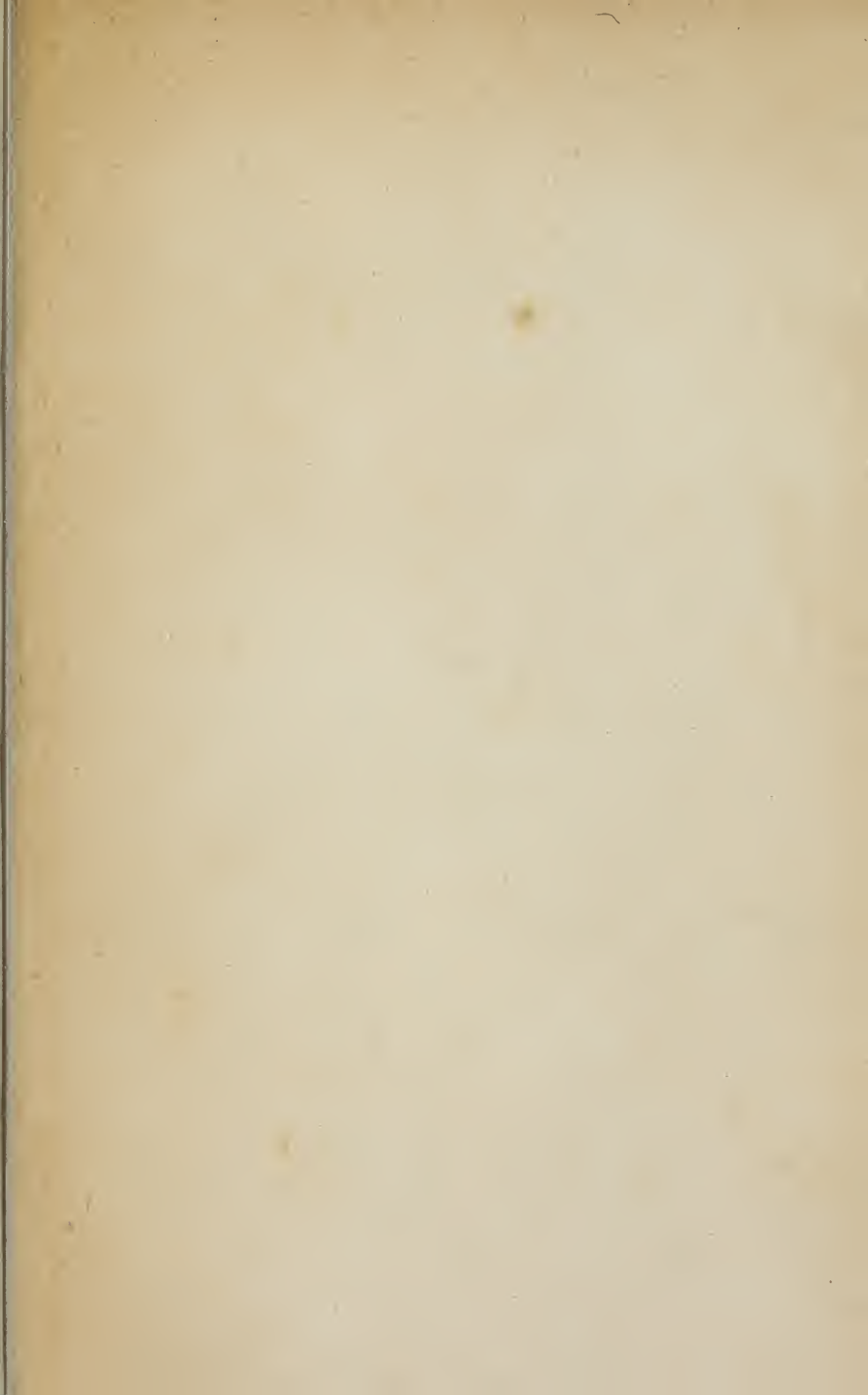
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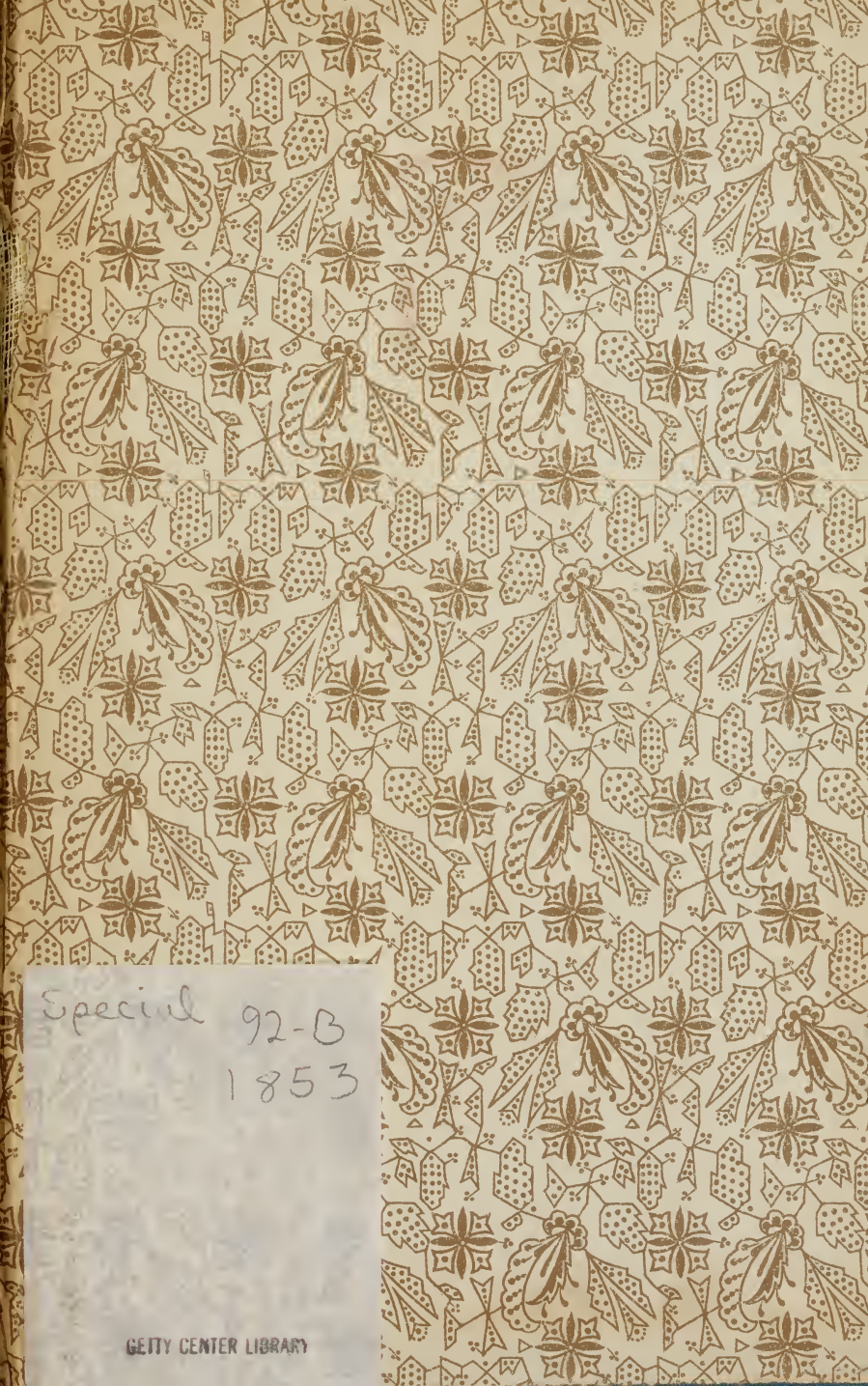
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